

AESCHYLUS

ΠΕΡΣΑΙ

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ ΠΕΡΣΩΝ

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ, μήτηρ Ξέρξου

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τάδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων
Ἑλλάδ' ἐς αἶαν πιστὰ καλεῖται,
καὶ τῶν ἀφνεῶν καὶ πολυχρύσων
ἐδράνων φύλακες,

5 κατὰ πρεσβείαν οὕς αὐτὸς ἄναξ

PERSIANS

PERSIANS

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

CHORUS of Persian elders of the King's council

QUEEN, widow of Darius and mother of Xerxes

MESSENGER

GHOST OF DARIUS, the late King of Persia

XERXES, the present King of Persia

Produced: 472 BC, as second play in the tetralogy Phineus, Persians, Glaucus of Potniae, Prometheus the Fire-Bearer.

Scene: Susa. Twelve chairs are set out for a meeting of the royal council. A mound (ignored until attention is drawn to it) represents the tomb of Darius. One side-passage is imagined as leading to the city and palace, the other towards the west and Greece.

Enter CHORUS from the direction of the city.

chorus

Of the Persians, who have departed
for the land of Greece, we are called the Trusted,¹
the guardians of the wealthy palace rich in gold,
whom our lord himself, King Xerxes
son of Darius, chose by seniority

¹ A Greek term for the close counsellors of the Persian king; cf. Xenophon, Anabasis 1.5.15. The opening of the play closely echoes that of Phrynichus' earlier play on the same theme (Phrynichus fr. 8), but for βεβηκότων "who have gone" Aeschylus substitutes οἰχομένων, which carries a strong (though by the speakers unintended) suggestion that those who have departed are destined not to return.

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- Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς Δαρειογενῆς
 εἶλετο χώρας ἐφορεύειν
 ἀμφὶ δὲ νόστῳ τῷ βασιλείῳ
 καὶ πολυάνδρου στρατιάς ἤδη
 10 κακόμαντις ἄγαν ὀρσολοπεῖται
 θυμὸς ἔσωθεν
 πᾶσα γὰρ ἰσχὺς Ἀσιατογενῆς
 οἴχωνκε, νέον δ' ἄνδρα βαυίζει
 <|>,
 κοῦτε τις ἄγγελος οὔτε τις ἱππεὺς
 15 ἄστυ τὸ Περσῶν ἀφικνεῖται
 οἶτε τὸ Σούσων ἢ δ' Ἀγβατάνων
 καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Κίσσιον ἔρκος
 προλιπόντες ἔβαν, οἱ μὲν ἐφ' ἵππων,
 οἱ δ' ἐπὶ ναῶν, πεζοὶ τε βάδην
 20 πολέμου στίφος παρέχοντες
 οἶος Ἀμίστρης ἢ δ' Ἀρταφρένης

6 after Δαρειογενῆς M I b k' insert Δαρσίου υἱὸς (υἱὸς Δαρσίου k').

9 πολυάνδρου Wecklein: πολυχρύσου (-ους M) codd.

13 –14 lacuna posited by Mekler: perh. e.g. <λειφθεῖσα γυνή πάντα κατ' οἶκον>.

16 Ἀγβατάνων Brunck (so M at 535, 961): Ἐκβατάνων codd.

17 Κίσσιον b: κίσσινον M I b k.

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to supervise the country.
 But by now the spirit within me,
 all too ready to foresee evil, is troubled
 about the return of the King
 and of his vast army of men;
 for all the strength of the Asiatic race
 has departed, and <in every house
 the woman left behind> howls for her young husband;²
 and no messenger, no horseman,
 has come to the Persian capital.
 They left the walls of Susa and Agbatana³
 and the ancient ramparts of Cissia⁴
 and went, some on horseback,
 some on board ship, and the marching infantry
 providing the fighting masses.
 Such were Amistres and Artaphrenes

2 For this tentative restoration cf. 63–64, 123–5, 135–9, 541–5, and see generally A. F. Garvie, *Lexis* 17 (1999) 26–28. If we do not posit a lacuna, we are forced to assume that the νέος ἄνθρωπος is Xerxes (cf. 782) and that it is “the strength of the Asiatic race” (i.e. the army) which is “howling” about him; but it makes no sense that the chorus should make confident assertions about the state of opinion in the army when the whole context is concerned with the apprehensions that are assailing them owing to their total lack of information about what the army is doing and how it is faring.

3 The capital of Media, about 300 km north of Susa; usually called Ecbatana by Herodotus and later Greek authors (modern Hamadan).

4 Aeschylus seems to take this as the name of a city (cf. 120); it was in fact the name of the region (today Khuzestan, or al-Ahwaz, in south-western Iran) of which Susa was the chief city.

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- καὶ Μεγαβάτης ἡδ' Ἀστάσπης,
 ταγοὶ Περσῶν,
 βασιλῆς βασιλέως ὑποχοὶ μεγάλου,
 25 σοῦνται, στρατιᾶς πολλῆς ἔφοροι,
 τοξοδάμαντές τ' ἡδ' ἵποβάται,
 φοβεροὶ μὲν ἰδεῖν, δεινοὶ δὲ μάχην
 ψυχῆς εὐτλήμονι δόξῃ
 Ἀρτεμβάρης θ' ἵπποχάρμης
 30 καὶ Μασίστρης, ὃ τε τοξοδάμας
 ἐσθλὸς Ἰμαῖος, Φαρανδάκης θ'
 ἵππων τ' ἐλατήρ Σοσθάνης·
 ἄλλους δ' ὁ μέγας καὶ πολυθρέμμων
 Νεῦλος ἔπεμψεν Σουσιस्कάνης,
 35 Πηγασταγῶν Αἰγυπτογενῆς,
 ὃ τε τῆς ἱερᾶς Μέμφιδος ἄρχων
 μέγας Ἀρσάμης, τάς τ' ὠγυγίους
 Θήβας ἐφέπων Ἀριόμαρδος,
 καὶ ἐλαιοβάται ναῶν ἐρέται
 40 δεινοὶ πλῆθος τ' ἀνάριθμοι·
 ἀβροδιαίτων δ' ἔπεται Λυδῶν
 ὄχλος, οἷτ' ἐπίταν ἡπειρογενὲς
 κατέχουσιν ἔθνος, τοὺς Μιτραγάθης

22 Μεγαβάτης x: Μεγαβάζης k: Μεταβάτης M Ib.

28 εὐτλήμονι k, Thomas: ἐν τλήμονι M Ib k.

43 Μιτρα- k: Μιτρο- k: Μητρα- or Μητρο- M Ib k.

PERSIANS

and Megabates and Astaspes,⁵
 marshals of the Persians,
 kings subordinate to the Great King,
 who have sped away—overseers of a great army,
 slayers with the bow or riders of the horse,
 terrifying to behold and fearsome in battle
 in the steadfast self-confidence of their hearts;
 and Artembares the charioteer
 and Masistres, and brave Himaeus
 the archer, and Pharandaces,
 and Sosthanes, driver of horses.
 The great, nurturing stream
 of Nile sent others: Susiscanes;
 the Egyptian-born Pegastagon;
 great Arsames, the ruler
 of holy Memphis, and Ariomardus
 who governs ancient Thebes;
 and dwellers in the marshes,⁶ rowing ships,
 formidable and in numbers past counting.
 Following them are a mass of Lydians
 of luxurious lifestyle, who control every race
 born on the mainland;⁷ Mitragathes

5 Here begins the first of three long catalogues of leaders of the army (the others are at 302–328 and 957–999). A substantial proportion of them are, certainly or probably, genuine Persian names; most of the others would give a Greek ear the impression of being Persian or at least exotic. Aeschylus does not seem to have been interested in prosopographical accuracy, at least not to any significant extent; of the twelve principal commanders named by Herodotus (7.82, 88, 97) not one is mentioned in the play.

6 Of the Nile delta.

7 “The mainland” (ἡπειρος) here means (western) Asia Minor, which had once been controlled by the kingdom of Lydia and was now governed from that kingdom’s former capital, Sardis, by a Persian satrap.

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Ἀρκευὺς τ' ἀγαθός, βασιλῆς διόποι,
 45 χαί πολύχρυσοι Σάρδεις ἐπόχους
 πολλοῖς ἄρμασιν ἐξορμῶσιν,
 δίρρυμά τε καὶ τρίρρυμα τέλη,
 φοβερὰν ὄψιν προσιδέσθαι
 στεῦνται δ' ἱεροῦ Τμώλου πελάται
 50 ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλεῖν δούλιον Ἑλλάδι,
 Μάρδων, Θάρυβις, λόγχης ἄκμονες,
 καὶ ἀκοντισταὶ Μυσοί· Βαβυλῶν δ'
 ἢ πολύχρυσος πάμμικτον ὄχλον
 πέμπει σύρδην, ναῶν τ' ἐπόχους
 55 καὶ τοξοὺς κ' ἰσχυροὺς
 τὸ μαχαιροφόρον τ' ἔθνος ἐκ πάσης
 Ἀσίας ἔπεται
 δειναῖς βασιλέως ὑπὸ πομπαῖς.
 τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσίδος αἴας
 60 οἴχεται ἀνδρῶν,
 οὓς περὶ πᾶσα χθὼν Ἀσιήτις
 θρέψασα πόθῳ στένεται μαλερῶ,
 τοκέες τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμερολογδὸν
 τείνοντα χρόνον τρομέονται.

στρ. α. πεπέρακεν μὲν ὁ περσέπτολις ἤδη

45 χαί Blomfield: καὶ codd.

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and brave Arcteus, kingly commanders,
 and Sardis, rich in gold, urge them forth,
 riding in many chariots,
 squadrons with two poles and with three,⁸
 a fearsome sight to behold;
 and those who dwell near holy Tmolus⁹ are eager
 to impose the yoke of slavery on Greece,
 Mardon and Tharybis, anvils of the spear,¹⁰
 and the javelin-men of Mysia.¹¹ And Babylon,
 rich in gold, sends forth a mixed multitude
 in a long trailing column, men on board ships
 and men trusted for their bravery as archers;
 and the sabre-carrying host
 from all Asia follows
 at the awesome summons of the King.
 Such is the flower of the men of Persia's land
 that has departed,
 for whom the whole land of Asia,
 which reared them, sighs with a longing that burns,
 and parents and wives count the days
 and tremble as the time stretches out.
 The city-sacking¹² army of the King

8 We are probably meant to assume that, as regularly in Homer (and as in Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 6. 1. 51), two horses are yoked to each pole, so that these are four- and six-horse chariots. Greeks (who in any case had long abandoned the use of chariots in war) never yoked more than two horses to a chariot, any extra horses being controlled by traces (cf. Agamemnon 1640–1).

9 A mountain near Sardis.

10 i.e. men who no more flinch before the spear than an anvil flinches before the hammer.

11 An inland region of north-western Asia Minor, lying north of Sardis, around the later famous city of Pergamum.

12 This word (περσέπτολις) is the first of many puns linking the name of Persia with πέρθεσθαι, πορθεῖν “to sack, devastate”.

- 66 βασιλῆος στρατὸς εἰς ἀντίτορον γείτονα χώραν,
 λινοδέσμων σχεδία πορθμὸν ἀμείψας
 70 Ἀθαμαντίδος Ἑλλάς,
 πολύγομφον ὄδισμα ζυγὸν ἀμφιβάλων ἀνχένη
 πόντου.
 ἀντ. α πολυάνδρου δ' Ἀσίας θούριος ἄρχων
 75 ἐπὶ πᾶσαν χθόνα ποιμανόριον θεῖον ἐλαύνει
 διχόθεν, πεζονόμοις ἔκ τε θαλάσσης
 ὀχυροῖσι πεποιθώς
 80 στυφελοῖς ἐφέταις, χρυσογόνου γενεᾶς ἰσόθεος φῶς.
 στρ. β κυάνεον δ' ὄμμασι λεύσσαν
 φονίου δέργμα δράκοντος,
 πολύχειρ καὶ πολυναύτας,
 Σύριόν θ' ἄρμα διώκων,
 85 ἐπάγει δουρικλυτοῖς ἀνδράσι
 τοξόδαμνον Ἄρη.
 ἀντ. β δόκιμος δ' οὔτις ὑποστὰς

80 χρυσογόνου γρΣΜ b: χρυσονόμου Μ I b k.
 82 φονίου b k: φοινίου Μ I b k.

has now passed over to the neighbour land on the other
 side of the water,
 crossing the strait of Helle, daughter of Athamas,¹³
 by means of a boat-bridge tied together with flaxen
 cables,
 placing a roadway, fastened with many bolts, as a yoke
 on the neck of the sea.

The bold ruler of populous Asia
 drives his divine flock over the whole world
 on both elements, trusting in commanders stout and
 rugged,
 those who govern the land force and those at sea—
 a man equal to the gods, from the race begotten of
 gold.¹⁴

With the dark glance
 of a deadly serpent in his eyes,
 with many hands and many ships,
 driving a swift Syrian chariot,¹⁵
 he leads a war-host that slays with the bow¹⁶
 against men renowned for spear-fighting.

No one can be counted on to withstand

13 i.e. the Hellespont.

14 Alluding to the conception of Perseus when Zeus visited his mother Danaë in the form of a shower of gold; the Persians were believed to be descended from Perses, son of Perseus and Andromeda (Herodotus 7.61.3, 7.150.2.).

15 The extremely pessimistic response said to have been given initially to the Athenians when they consulted the Delphic oracle before Xerxes' invasion (Herodotus 7.140.2–3) spoke of the city being destroyed by πῦρ τε καὶ ὄξυς Ἄρης Συρηγενὲς ἄρμα διώκων.

16 lit. "bow-slaying Ares".

AESCHYLUS

μεγάλη ρεύματι φωτῶν
 ὀχυροῖς ἔρκεσιν εἵργειν
 90 ἄμαχον κύμα θαλάσσης.
 ἀπρόσοιστος γὰρ ὁ Περσᾶν
 92 στρατὸς ἀλκίφρων τε λαός.
 102 θεόθεν γὰρ κατὰ Μοῖρ' ἐκράτησεν
 στρ γ τὸ παλαιόν, ἐπέσκηψε δὲ Πέρσαις
 105 πολέμους πυργοδαίκτους
 διέπειν ἵπιοχάρμας
 τε κλόνους πόλεων τ' ἀναστάσεις·
 ἀντ γ ἔμαθον δ' εὐρυπόροιο θαλάσσης
 110 πολιαυνομένας ἱπνεύματι λάβρῳ
 ἔσορᾶν ἢ πόντιον ἄλσος,
 πίσυνοι λεπτοδόμοις πείσ-
 113 μασι λαοπόροις τε μαχαναῖς.
 93 ἐμφ. δολόμετην δ' ἀπάταν θεοῦ
 τίς ἀνὴρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει;
 95 τίς ὁ κραυπνῶ ποδὶ πηδῆ-
 ματος εὐπετέος ἀνάσσαν;
 φυλόφρων γὰρ ποτισαίνουσα τὸ πρῶτον παράγει

93 –101 transposed by K.O. Müller to follow 113.

110 –1 πνεύματι λάβρῳ | ἔσορᾶν codd.: πνεύμασι λάβροι- | σι πρᾶν Enger.

97 ποτισαίνουσα Hermann, cf. ΣΜ προ <σ>σαίνει: σαί- νουσα codd.

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this great flood of men
 and be a sturdy barrier to ward off
 the irresistible waves of the sea:
 none dare come near the army
 of the Persians and their valiant host.

For Destiny long ago prevailed
 by divine decree, and imposed on the Persians
 the fate of conducting wars
 that destroy towered walls, clashes
 of chariots in battle, and the uprooting of cities;
 and they have learned to cross¹⁷ the level expanse
 of the sea, when its broad waters
 are whitened by rough winds,
 trusting in cables made of thin strands
 and in devices for transporting an army.

But what mortal man can escape
 the guileful deception of a god?
 Who is so light of foot
 that he has power to leap easily away?
 For Ruin begins by fawning on a man in a friendly way¹⁸

17 I translate the conjecture by Enger mentioned in the textual note; the transmitted reading, ἔσορᾶν “to look on”, gives poor sense (one can look on the sea without ever leaving the shore) and involves a metrical anomaly (hiatus) not otherwise found in the metrically homogeneous section (entirely in ionics) 65–113.

18 As Cerberus does to those arriving at the gates of Hades (Hesiod, *Theogony* 769–771).

AESCHYLUS

- βροτὸν εἰς ἀρκύστατ' Ἄτα,
 100 τόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπὲκ θνατὸν ἀλύξαντα φυγεῖν.
- 114 στρ. δ ταῦτά μοι μελαγχίτων
 115 φρὴν ἀμύσσεται φόβῳ,
 “ὅ᾽ Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος”,
 τοῦδε μὴ πόλις πύθη-
 ται, “κένανδρον μέγ' ἄστυ Σουσίδος”.
- ἀντ. δ καὶ τὸ Κισσίων πόλισμ'
 121 ἀντίδουπον ἄσεται,
 “ὅ᾽”, τοῦτ' ἔπος γυναικοπλη-
 θῆς ὄμιλος ἀπύων,
 125 βυσσίοις δ' ἐν πέπλοις πέσῃ λακίς.
- στρ. ε πᾶς γὰρ ἱππηλάτας
 καὶ πεδοστιβῆς λεῶς
 σμήνος ὥς ἐκλέλοιπεν μελισσᾶν σὺν ὀρχάμῳ
 στρατοῦ,
 130 τὸν ἀμφίζευκτον ἐξαμείψας ἀμφοτέρως ἄλιον
 πρῶνα κοινὸν αἴας.
- ἀντ. ε λέκτρα δ' ἀνδρῶν πόθῳ

99 ἀρκύστατ' Ἄτα West, cf. ΣΜ which cites Iliad 9.505: ἀρκύστατα codd.

100 ὑπὲκ (ὑπεκ) γρI, cf. ΣΦ ὑπεκδραμόντα: ὑπέρ codd.

121 ἄσεται Burney, cf. ΣΜ ἀντηγήσει: ἔσεται (ἔσσεται b' k') codd.

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and leads him astray into her net,
 from which it is impossible for a mortal to escape and
 flee.

For that reason my mind
 is clothed in black and torn with fear:
 “Woe for the Persian army!”—
 I dread that our city may hear this cry—
 “The great capital of Susiana is emptied of its
 manhood!”—

and that the city of the Cissians
 will sing in antiphon,
 a vast throng of women
 howling out that word “woe!”,
 and their linen gowns will be rent and torn.¹⁹

For all the horse-driving host
 and the infantry too,
 like a swarm of bees, have left the hive with the leader of
 their army,
 passing over the projecting spur²⁰ that belongs to both
 Continents
 and yokes them together across the sea.

And beds are filled with tears

19 lit. “rending will fall on their linen gowns”.

20 i.e. the bridge of boats, conceived as an artificial promontory which seems at one end like an extension of Asia, and at the other end like an extension of Europe.

AESCHYLUS

- πίμπλαται δακρύμασιν·
 135 Περσίδες δ' ἀβροπενθεῖς ἐκάστα πόθῳ φιλόνορι
 τὸν αἰχμάντα θοῦρον εὐνατῆρ' ἀποπεμψαμένα
 λείπεται μονόζυξ.
 140 ἀλλ' ἄγε, Πέρσαι, τόδ' ἐνεζόμενοι
 στέγος ἀρχαῖον
 φροντίδα κεδνὴν καὶ βαθύβουλον
 θώμεθα· χρεία δὲ προσήκει
 πῶς ἄρα πράσσει Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς
 145 Δαρειογενής;
 147 πότερον τόξου ῥῦμα τὸ νικᾶν,
 ἢ δορυκράνου
 λόγχης ἰσχύς κεκράτηκεν;

135 ἀβροπενθεῖς b, cf. ΣΜ ἀβρύνεσθαι: ἀκροπενθεῖς M I b k.

{146} τὸ πατρωνύμιον (πατρώνυμον b' k') γένος ἀμέτερον (ἄμετρον or ἄμετρον b' k') codd.: τὸ πατρ. del. Schütz, γένος ἀμέτερον del. Butler.

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because the men are missed and longed for:
 Persian women, grieving amid their luxury, every one,
 loving and longing for her husband,
 having sent on his way the bold warrior who was her
 bedfellow,
 is left behind, a partner unpartnered.²¹

But come, Persians, let us sit down
 in this ancient building²²
 and take good thought and deep counsel—
 for there is pressing need to do so.

[They take their seats.]
 So how is King Xerxes,
 son of Darius, faring?²³
 Is the bent bow victorious,
 or has the power
 of the spearhead's point conquered?

[A carriage is seen approaching. Seated in it is the QUEEN-MOTHER,
 magnificently attired and attended. The CHORUS rise.]

²¹ lit. "yoked alone".

²² The building was probably left to the audience's imagination, assisted by the presence of chairs (which may have been covered with fleeces or the like for softer sitting, as in Phrynichus' play); see Sommerstein AT 35, 71.

²³ The manuscripts here add four words, translatable as "our race named after [our? his?] father", which in context are meaningless. West, *Studies* 78–79, makes an ingenious attempt to save them (proposing to read Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς Δαναῆς τε γόνου τὸ πατρωνύμιον γένος ἡμέτερον "King Xerxes . . . and our race named after the son of Danaë [Perseus, cf. on 80]"); but the chorus's anxieties at present are not for the Persian nation as a whole but for the army (8–15, 60–64, 116–7, 126–139, 158). The line probably arose from a pair of glosses pointing out (i) that Δαρειογενής was a patronymic adjective and (ii) that the (already corrupted) text was unmetrical (ἄμετρον, cf. schol. Seven 885, schol. Ar. Clouds 92, schol. Iliad 2.520, 658).

- 150 ἄλλ' ἤδε θεῶν ἴσον ὀφθαλμοῖς
 φάος ὀρμαῖται μήτηρ βασιλέως,
 βασιλεια δ' ἐμή· προσπίτνω
 καὶ προσφθόγοις δὲ χρεῶν αὐτὴν
 πάντας μύθοισι προσαιδᾶν.
- 155 ὦ βαθυζώνων ἄνασσα Περσίδων ὑπερτάτη,
 μήτηρ ἢ Ξέρξου γεραιά, χαῖρε, Δαρείου γύναι·
 θεοῦ μὲν εὐνάτειρα Περσῶν, θεοῦ δὲ καὶ μήτηρ
 ἔφυς,
 εἴ τι μὴ δαίμων παλαιὸς νῦν μεθέστηκε στρατῷ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

- ταῦτα δὴ λιποῦς' ἱκάνω χρυσεοστόλμους δόμους
 160 καὶ τὸ Δαρείου τε κάμὸν κοινὸν εὐνατήριον,
 καί με καρδίαν ἀμύσσει φροντίς· εἰς δ' ὑμᾶς ἐρῶ
 μῦθον οὐδαμῶς ἐμαντῆς <
 > οὐκ ἀδείμαντος, φίλοι,
 μὴ μέγας πλοῦτος κόνισας οὐδας ἀντρέψη ποδὶ

162 lacuna posited by Sommerstein.

162 162 οὐκ ΣΦ: οὐς' MI b k: οὐδ' (οὐδὲ) k.

But look, here comes the mother of the King,
 my Queen, a light as brilliant as that which shines
 in the eyes of the gods! I fall down before her—

[The chorus prostrate themselves.]
 and it is right that we all address her
 with words of greeting.

[The CHORUS rise to their feet, and their leader addresses the QUEEN
 as she descends from her carriage.]

All hail, my Queen, most exalted among the slim-waisted women of
 Persia, venerable mother of Xerxes and wife of Darius! You were the
 spouse of one who was a god to the Persians, and you are the mother
 of their god too, unless our old protecting power has now changed
 sides against our army.

queen

It is for that reason that I have come here, leaving my gold-bedecked
 palace and the bedchamber I once shared with Darius, and that my
 heart is torn by anxiety. I will tell you a saying which is not my own
 creation <but has come down from our ancestors, and which causes
 me to be> very fearful, my friends,²⁴ that great wealth may make the
 dust rise from the ground by tripping up²⁵ the prosperity that

24 The supplement offered is not intended to do more than make reasonably
 coherent sense, on the assumption that only one line has been lost; in that case the
 “saying” may be the familiar piece of (Greek) folk wisdom expressed in 163–4
 about the danger of excessive wealth. However, it is possible that the lacuna is
 longer than this.

25 lit. “overturning with its foot”, a metaphor from wrestling; the dust rises
 because the tripped man has fallen heavily, probably on his back (cf. Suppliants
 91, Iliad 23.727, Archilochus fr. 130.3–4 West). See D. Sansone, *Hermes* 107
 (1979) 115–6; and for the idea that great (excessive) wealth is the enemy of true
 prosperity, cf. 824–6, Ag. 374–384, 471, 750–6.

AESCHYLUS

- ὄλβον, ὃν Δαρεῖος ἤρεν οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν τινος.
 165 ταῦτά μοι μέριμν' ἄφραστός ἐστιν ἐν φρεσὶν διπλῇ,
 167 μὴτ' ἀγρημάτοισι λάμπειν φῶς, ὅσον σθένος πάρα,
 166 μῆτε χρημάτων ἀνάνδρων πλήθος ἐν τιμῇ σέβειν.
 168 ἔστι γὰρ πλοῦτός γ' ἀμεμφής, ἀμφὶ δ' ὀφθαλμῷ
 φόβος·
 ὄμμα γὰρ δόμων νομίζω δεσπότου παρουσίαν.
 170 πρὸς τὰδ', ὡς οὕτως ἐχόντων τῶνδε, σύμβουλοι
 λόγου
 τοῦδέ μοι γένεσθε, Πέρσαι, γηραλέα πιστώματα·
 πάντα γὰρ τὰ κέδν' ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστί μοι βουλευόμενα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- εὖ τόδ' ἴσθι, γῆς ἄνασσα τῆσδε, μὴ σε δις φράσαι
 μὴτ' ἔπος μὴτ' ἔργον, ὃν ἂν δύναμις ἡγεῖσθαι
 θέλῃ·
 175 εὐμενεῖς γὰρ ὄντας ἡμᾶς τῶνδε συμβούλους καλεῖς.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

πολλοῖς μὲν αἰεὶ νυκτέροις ὀνείρασι
 ζύνειμι', ἀφ' οὗπερ παῖς ἐμὸς στεῦλας στρατὸν
 Ἰαόνων γῆν οἷχεται Πέρσαι θέλων·
 ἀλλ' οὐτί πω τοιόνδ' ἐναργὲς εἰδόμην

165 διπλῇ moved to end of line by Porson: in codd. it follows ταῦτά μοι.

166-167 transposed by Ludwig.

168 ὀφθαλμῷ λΣν: ὀφθαλμοῖς (-μός κ') codd.

PERSIANS

Darius, not without the aid of some god, had built up. For that reason there is in my mind an indescribable anxiety, a twofold one. For those who are without wealth, the light of success does not shine in proportion to their physical power; but neither do men revere and honour an accumulation of wealth without men to defend it.²⁶ Our wealth is ample,²⁷ but I fear for our very eye; for I consider the master, when present, to be the eye of his house. In view of this, considering the situation to be as I have said, be my counsellors about this matter, you venerable, trusty Persians; for all the good advice I receive comes from you.

chorus

Be well assured, Queen of this land, that you do not have to tell us twice to do any service in word or deed, so far as our ability permits:²⁸ we on whom you call for advice are your loyal friends.

queen

Dreams of the night have been my frequent companions ever since my son led out his army and departed in order to lay waste the land of the Ionians;²⁹ but never yet have I had one that was so plain as during the night just past. I

26 In other words, human and material resources are alike essential to the acquisition and maintenance of political power (cf. Sophocles, Oedipus the King 540-2), and a regime that is strong in only one of these respects may well be in danger.

27 lit. "irreproachable".

28 lit. "of those in which ability is willing to lead (us)".

29 The Persians and many other peoples of western Asia applied the name "Ionian" (Old Persian Yauna, Hebrew Yawan, etc.) to all Greeks, doubtless because the first Greeks with whom they came into contact, those of Asia Minor, mostly belonged to the Ionian branch of the Greek people.

AESCHYLUS

- 180 ὥς τῆς πάρουθεν εὐφρόνης· λέξω δέ σοι.
 ἔδοξάτην μοι δύο γυναῖκ' εὐείμονα,
 ἢ μὲν πέπλοισι Περσικοῖς ἡσκημένῃ,
 ἢ δ' αὖτε Δωρικοῖσιν, εἰς ὅψιν μολαῖν,
 μεγέθει τε τῶν νῦν ἐκπρεπεστάτα πολὺ
 185 κάλλει τ' ἀμώμω, καὶ κασιγνήτα γένους
 ταύτου· πάτραν δ' ἔναιον ἢ μὲν Ἑλλάδα
 κλήρω λαχοῦσα γαῖαν, ἢ δὲ βάρβαρον.
 τούτω στάσιν τιν', ὥς ἐγὼ ὀρόουν ὄραϊν,
 τεύχεον ἐν ἀλλήλαισι· παῖς δ' ἐμὸς μαθὼν
 190 κατεῖχε κάπρῳ, ἄρμασιν δ' ὕπο
 ζεύγνυσιν αὐτῷ καὶ λέπαδν' ὑπ' ἀνχένων
 τίθησι· χῆ μὲν τῇδ' ἐπυργοῦτο στολῇ
 ἐν ἡνίαισί τ' εἶχεν εὐαρκτον στόμα·
 ἢ δ' ἐσφάδαζε, καὶ χεροῖν ἔντη δίφρου
 195 διασπαράσσει καὶ ξυναρπάζει βία
 ἄνευ χαλινῶν, καὶ ζυγὸν θραύει μέσον.
 πίπτει δ' ἐμὸς παῖς· καὶ πατὴρ παρίσταται
 Δαρεῖος οἰκτίρων σφε· τὸν δ' ὅπως ὄρα
 Ξέρξης, πέπλους ῥήγνυσιν ἀμφὶ σώματι.
 200 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ νυκτὸς εἰσιδεῖν λέγω·
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνέστην καὶ χεροῖν καλλιπρόου
 ἔψαυσα πηγῆς, σὺν θυηπόλῳ χερὶ

194 ἔντη Scaliger: ἐν τῇ vel sim. codd.

PERSIANS

will tell you about it. There seemed to come into my sight two finely dressed women, one arrayed in Persian, the other in Doric robes,³⁰ outstandingly superior in stature to the women of real life, of flawless beauty, and sisters of the same stock: one, by the fall of the lot, was a native and inhabitant of the land of Greece, the other of the Orient.³¹ I seemed to see these two raising some kind of strife between themselves; my son, perceiving this, tried to restrain and calm them, yoked them under his chariot, and passed the yoke-strap under their necks. One of them, thus arrayed, towered up proudly, and kept her jaw submissively in harness; but the other began to struggle, tore the harness from the chariot with her hands, dragged it violently along without bridle or bit, and smashed the yoke in half. My son fell out. His father Darius appeared, standing beside him and showing pity; but when Xerxes saw him, he tore the robes that clothed his body. That, I say, is what I saw in the night. When I had risen and washed my hands in a fair-flowing spring, I approached the altar with offerings

30 Aeschylus chooses to dress the woman representing Greece in "Doric" rather than "Ionic" style, not because he is imagining her as a Dorian Greek (e.g. a Spartan)—both styles were in use in the Athens of his day—but because the Doric chiton (typically woollen, and pinned at the shoulders) symbolized Greek simplicity, in contrast to Persian luxury, more effectively than the Ionic (draped, and often of fine linen). Both styles are seen, for example, on an amphora of about 460 BC in Oxford (Ashmolean 280) showing a father, mother and sister bidding farewell to a departing warrior; see S. Lewis, *The Athenian Woman* (London, 2002) 41 fig. 1.22.

31 Frequently in this play Persians speak of themselves as βάρβαροι, properly a Greek term for those who did not speak the Greek language; I have translated this throughout as "orient(al)" or "Eastern(er)" (but in other plays, where the term is used by Greeks, I have retained the traditional rendering "barbarian").

AESCHYLUS

- βωμόν προσέστην, ἀποτρόποισι δαίμοσιν
 θέλουσα θῦσαι πελανόν, ὧν τέλη τάδε.
 205 ὁρῶ δὲ φεύγοντ' αἰετὸν πρὸς ἐσχάραν
 Φοίβου· φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογγος ἐστάθην, φίλοι·
 μεθύστερον δὲ κίρκον εἰσορῶ δρόμῳ
 πτεροῖς ἐφορμαίνοντα καὶ γηλαῖς κάρα
 τύλλονθ'· ὁ δ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο γ' ἢ πτήξας δέμας
 210 παρεῖχε. ταῦτ' ἐμοὶ τε δαίματ' εἰσιδεῖν
 ὑμῖν τ' ἀκούειν. εὖ γὰρ ἴστε, παῖς ἐμὸς
 πράξας μὲν εὖ θαυμαστός ἂν γένοιτ' ἀνὴρ·
 κακῶς δὲ πράξας—οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει,
 σωθεὶς δ' ὁμοίως τῆσδε κοιρανεῖ χθονός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 215 οὐ σε βουλόμεσθα, μήτηρ, οὐτ' ἄγαν φοβεῖν λόγοις
 οὔτε θαρσύνειν· θεοὺς δὲ προστροπαῖς ἰκνουμένη,
 εἴ τι φλαῦρον εἶδες, αἰτοῦ τῶνδ' ἀποτροπὴν τελεῖν,

210 ἐμοὶ τε Blomfield: ἐμοὶ b: ἐμοιγε M I b k.

210 εἰσιδεῖν Hartung: ἐς ἰδεῖν vel sim. M b (ἐστ' ἐσιδεῖν b): ἐστ' ἰδεῖν vel
 sim. I b k.

211 τ' k: δ' M I b.

PERSIANS

in my hand, wishing to pour a rich libation to the deities who avert
 evil, for whom such rites are appropriate. Then I saw an eagle fleeing
 for refuge to the altar of Phoebus³²—and I was rooted speechless to
 the spot with terror, my friends. Next I saw a hawk swooping on him
 at full speed with beating wings, and tearing at his head with its
 talons³³—and he simply cowered and submitted.³⁴ This was
 terrifying for me to behold, and must be terrifying for you to hear; for
 you know well that if my son were successful he would be a very
 much admired man, but were he to fail—well, he is not accountable
 to the community,³⁵ and if he comes home safe he remains ruler of
 this land.

chorus

Mother, we do not wish to say what would make you either unduly
 fearful or unduly optimistic. You should approach the gods with
 supplications and ask them, if there was anything sinister in what you
 saw, to ensure that it is averted,

32 The omen is easy to interpret (as is evident from the fact that Aeschylus
 leaves his audience to interpret it for themselves): that the mother of the greatest
 of human kings, full of anxiety about his fate, sees the “king of birds”
 (Agamemnon 114) fleeing from a bird of lesser status and submitting without
 resistance to degrading treatment, speaks for itself. Various explanations have
 been offered for why the eagle is represented as seeking the altar of Phoebus
 (Apollo) in particular; I suggest that the point is that the eagle is going to the worst
 possible place—for the eagle is the bird of Zeus, not Apollo, and the latter, though
 his best-known avian connection is with swans, also has one with hawks (Iliad
 15.237; Odyssey 15.526; Aristophanes, Birds 516). Contrast Aesop, Fable 3 Perry,
 where the eagle seeks sanctuary from an enemy by nesting in the lap of Zeus. Has
 Xerxes too gone to the most unpropitious place he could have chosen?

33 No real hawk would or could do this (even if, per impossibile, it were to
 attack an eagle), but cf. Odyssey 15.526–7.

34 lit. “provided his body” (to be abused).

35 Unlike an Athenian general such as Miltiades, who not long after his
 victory at Marathon was nearly sentenced to death for failing to capture Paros, and
 eventually died in prison (Herodotus 6.136; Plato, Gorgias 516d–e; Plutarch,
 Cimon 4.4).

τὰ δ' ἀγάθ' ἐκτελεῖ γενέσθαι σοὶ τε καὶ τέκνοις
σέθεν

καὶ πόλει φίλοις τε πᾶσι· δεύτερον δὲ χρη̃ χοᾶς

220 Γῇ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς χέασθαι· πρηνεμενῶς δ' αἰτοῦ
τάδε,

σὸν πόσιν Δαρεῖον, ὄνπερ φησὶ ἰδεῖν κατ' εὐφρόνην,
ἐσθλά σοι πέμπειν τέκνω τε γῆς ἔνερθεν εἰς φάος,
τάμπαλιν δὲ τῶνδε γαῖα κάτοχ' ἀμαυροῦσθαι
σκότῳ.

ταῦτα θυμόμαντις ὣν σοὶ πρηνεμενῶς παρήνεσα,

225 εὐ̃ δὲ πανταχῇ τελεῖν σοὶ τῶνδε κρένομεν πέρι.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ἀλλὰ μὴν εὖνους γ' ὁ πρῶτος τῶνδ' ἐνυπνίων κριτῆς
παιδὶ καὶ δόμοις ἐμοῖσι τήνδ' ἐκύρωσας φάτιν.

ἐκτελοῖτο δὴ τὰ χρηστά· ταῦτα δ' ὥς ἐφίεσαι

πάντα θήσομεν θεοῖσι τοῖς τ' ἔνερθε γῆς φίλοις,

230 εὐ̃τ' ἂν εἰς οἴκους μόλωμεν. κεῖνο δ' ἐκμαθεῖν θέλω,
ὦ φίλοι· ποῦ τὰς Ἀθήνας φασὶν ἰδρῦσθαι χθονός;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τῆλε πρὸς δυσμαῖς ἄνακτος Ἥλιου φθινασμάτων.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ἀλλὰ μὴν ἵμεν' ἐμὸς παῖς τήνδε θηρᾶσαι πόλιν;

218 τὰ δ' ἀγάθ' b k: τὰ δ' ἀγαθὰ δ' M b: τὰ δ' ἀγαθὰ γ' k: τὰγαθὰ δ' vel
sim. I b.

228 δῆ k (?) z: δὲ M I b k.

230 κεῖνο b: κεῖνα M I b k.

but that what was good should be fulfilled for you, for your children,
for the community, and for everyone that you care for. Secondly, you
should pour drink-offerings to Earth and to the dead, and propitiate
them with this prayer: that your husband Darius, whom you say you
saw in the night, should send up to the light, from beneath the earth,
blessings for you and your son, but that whatever is contrary to them
be kept under the earth, ineffective, in the darkness. Using my
intelligence³⁶ to prophesy for you, I give you this advice in all good
will, and our interpretation of these signs is that things will turn out
well for you in every way.

queen

Yes, as the first interpreter of this dream you have shown yourself
loyal to my son and my house in the very definite words you have
spoken. May what was good indeed be fulfilled! We shall make all
these arrangements as you advise, towards the gods and towards our
friends beneath the earth, when we return home. But there is
something I wish to learn, my friends. Where in the world do they
say that Athens is situated?

chorus

Far away, near the place where the Lord Sun declines and sets.

queen

And yet my son had a desire to conquer that city?

36 sc. rather than any divine inspiration, or any training in seer-craft.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πᾶσα γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν Ἑλλὰς βασιλέως ὑπῆκοος.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

235 ὥδέ τις πάρεστιν αὐτοῖς ἀνδροπλήθεια στρατοῦ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

236 καὶ στρατὸς τοιοῦτος, ἔρξας πολλὰ δὴ Μήδους
κακά.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

239 πότρε γὰρ τοξουλκὸς αἶγμῃ διὰ χειρῶν αὐτοῖς
πρέπει;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

240 μηδαμῶς· ἔγχῃ σταδαῖα καὶ φεράσπιδες σαγαί.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

237 καὶ τί πρὸς τούτοισιν ἄλλο; πλοῦτος ἐξαρκῆς
δόμοις;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

238 ἀργύρου πηγὴ τις αὐτοῖς ἐστὶ, θησαυρὸς χθονός.

239-240 transposed by Trendelenburg to precede 237.

239 χειρῶν b (χειρῶν ΣΦ): χειρὸς vel sim. MI b k.

chorus

Yes, because all Greece would then become subject to the King.³⁷

queen

Do they have such great numbers of men in their army?³⁸

chorus

And an army of a quality that has already done the Medes³⁹ a great deal of harm.⁴⁰

queen

Why, are they distinguished for their wielding of the drawn bow and its darts?⁴¹

chorus

Not at all; they use spears for close combat and carry shields for defence.

queen

And what else apart from that? Is there sufficient wealth in their stores?

chorus

They have a fountain of silver, a treasure in their soil.⁴²

37 This was also the view of Herodotus (7. 139).

38 sc. in comparison with other Greeks. At the battle of Plataea in 479, the Athenian hoplite force was larger than that of any other state in the Greek alliance except Sparta (Herodotus 9.28.2–29.1) —and only half the Spartan hoplites were full citizens.

39 The Medes and the Persians were actually distinct (though kindred) peoples, but in ordinary Greek usage, and in this play (cf. 791), the two names are treated as synonymous; what we call “the Persian wars” Greeks normally called τὰ Μηδικά.

40 Referring mainly to the capture and burning of Sardis in 498, and the victory of Marathon in 490.

41 lit. “is the bow-drawn <arrow>point conspicuous in their hands?”

42 Referring to the silver mines of Laureium, where a rich new vein was discovered a few years before the Persian invasion—and exploited, by the advice of Themistocles, for the building of the fleet that won the battle of Salamis (Herodotus 7.144).

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

241 τίς δὲ ποιμάνωρ ἔπεστι κάπιδεσπόζει στρατῶ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὔτινος δοῦλοι κέκληνται φωτὸς οὐδ' ὑπήκοοι.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

πῶς ἂν οὖν μένοιεν ἄνδρας πολεμίους ἐπήλυδας;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὥστε Δαρείου πολὺν τε καὶ καλὸν φθεῖραι στρατόν.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

245 δεινὰ τοι λέγεις κiónτων τοῖς τεκοῦσι φροντίσαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν ταχ' εἴσῃ πάντα ναμερτῇ λογον·
τοῦδε γὰρ δράμημα φωτὸς Περσικὸν πρέπει μαθεῖν,
καὶ φέρει σαφές τι πρᾶγος ἐσθλὸν ἢ κακὸν κλυεῖν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

250 ὦ γῆς ἀπάσης Ἀσίδος πολίσματα,
ὦ Περσίς αἶα καὶ πολὺς πλούτου λιμὴν,
ὥς ἐν μιᾷ πληγῇ κατέφθαρται πολὺς
ὄλβος, τὸ Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴχεται πρσόν.

245 κiónτων Wecklein: íόντων codd.

PERSIANS

queen

And who is the shepherd, master and commander over their host?

chorus

They are not called slaves or subjects to any man.

queen

How then can they resist an invading enemy?

chorus

Well enough to have destroyed the large and splendid army of Darius.

queen

What you say is fearful to think about, for the parents of those who have gone there.

[A MESSENGER is seen approaching from the west, in great Haste.]

chorus

Well, it seems to me that you will soon know the whole story precisely. The way this man runs clearly identifies him as Persian,⁴³ and he will be bringing some definite news, good or bad, for us to hear.

messenger

O you cities of the whole land of Asia! O land of Persia, Repository⁴⁴ of great wealth! How all your great prosperity has been destroyed in a single blow, and the flower of the Persians are fallen and departed!

[To the chorus] Ah me, it

43 This has been seen as a reference to the Persians' system of fast couriers (Aeschylus alludes to them at Agamemnon 282—but they were mounted), or as a chauvinistic gibe, from a Greek point of view, at Persians' alleged cowardice (they run very fast—away from the enemy); more likely it is simply based on observation of the actual running styles of Greeks and Persians respectively. It would not be surprising if these styles tended to differ, given that Greek running techniques had been honed by many generations of athletic competition.

44 lit. "harbour".

AESCHYLUS

ὄμοι, κακὸν μὲν πρῶτον ἀγγέλλειν κακά·
 ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη πᾶν ἀναπτύξαι πάθος,
 255 Πέρσαι· στρατὸς γὰρ πᾶς ὄλωλε βαρβάρων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α ἄνια ἄνια, νεόκοτα καὶ
 δαί· αἰαῖ, διαίνεσθε, Πέρ-
 σαι, τόδ' ἄχος κλυόντες

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

260 ὥς πάντα γ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖνα διαπεπραγμένα·
 καὐτὸς δ' ἀέλπτως νόστιμον βλέπω φάος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ. α ἡ μακροβίος οὗδε γέ τις αἰ-
 ὶν ἐφάνθη γεραίοις, ἀκού-
 265 εἶν τόδε πῆμ' ἄελπτον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

καὶ μὴν παρὼν γε κοῦ λόγους ἄλλαν κλυόν,
 Πέρσαι, φράσαιμ' ἂν οἱ ἐπορσύνθη κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. β ὅτοτοτοῖ, μάταν
 τὰ πολλὰ βέλεια παμμιγῇ
 270 γὰς ἀπ' Ἀσίδος ἦλθ' ἐπ' αἶαν
 271 Δίαν, Ἑλλάδα χώραν.

256 after ἄνι(α) ἄνια codd. add κακά (καὶ b', κακά λυπηρά λυπηρά b'): del.
 Prien.

266 γς b k: τς M I b k (b' adds γς before παρὼν).

268 ὅτοτοτοῖ M I in 274: codd. here, and b k in 274, vary (ὅττοτοῖ in most).

PERSIANS

is terrible to be the first to announce terrible news, but I have no
 choice but to reveal the whole sad tale, Persians: the whole of the
 oriental army has been destroyed!

chorus

Painful, painful, unheard-of,
 calamitous! Aiai, let your tears flow, Persians,
 on hearing this grievous news!

messenger

I assure you, all those forces are annihilated; and I myself never
 expected to see the day of my return.

chorus

Truly this old life of ours
 has proved itself too long,⁴⁵ when we hear
 this sorrow beyond all expectation!

messenger

And I can also tell you, Persians, what kinds of horrors came to pass;
 I was there myself, I did not merely hear the reports of others.

chorus

Otototoi! It was all in vain
 that those many weapons, all mingled together,
 went from the land of Asia to the country
 of Zeus,⁴⁶ the land of Hellas!

45 i.e. we wish we had not lived to hear this news.

46 Hellen, the eponymous ancestor of the Hellenes, was often said to have
 been a son of Zeus (e.g. Euripides fr. 481.1–2); later the chorus (532–6), Darius
 (739–740) and by implication Xerxes himself (915–7) will attribute the Persian
 disaster to Zeus.

AESCHYLUS

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

278 οὐδὲν γὰρ ἤρκει τόξα, πᾶς δ' ἀπώλλυτο
279 λεῶς δαμασθεῖς ναῖοισιν ἐμβολαῖς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

274 ὀτοτοτοῖ, φίλων
ἀντ. β πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἀλιβαφῇ
κατθανόντα λέγεις φέρεσθαι
277 πλαγκταῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσιν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

272 πλήθουσι νεκρῶν δυσπότης ἐφθαρμένων
273 Σαλαμῆνος ἄκται πᾶς τε πρόσχωρος τόπος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

280 ἴν' ἀπότημοις βοᾶν
σφ. γ δυσαιανῇ †Πέρσαις δαΐοις†,
ὥς πάντα παγκάκως θέσαν
<δαίμονες> αἰαῖ στρατοῦ φθαρέντος.

272-3 and 278-9 interchanged by Stavridès.

279 λεῶς k: στρατός M I b k.

275 πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἀλιβαφῇ Prien: ἀλίδονα σώματα πολυβαφῇ codd.

277 διπλάκεσσιν codd.: πινάκεσσιν (and πλαγκτοῖς) Stavridès.

280 ἀπότημοις West: ἀποτμον codd.

281 Πέρσαις δαΐοις codd. (cf. 286): φίλοις West.

282-3 παγκάκως θέσαν Sier, <δαίμονες> Sommerstein: παγκάκως ἔθεσαν codd. (θεοὶ add. b', cf. ΣΦ): π. <θεοὶ> θέσαν Heimsoeth.

PERSIANS

messenger⁴⁷

Yes, our archery was of no avail; the whole host perished, destroyed
by the ramming of ships.

chorus

Otototoi, you are saying
that the dead bodies of our loved ones
are floating, soaked and constantly buffeted by salt water,
shrouded in mantles that drift in the waves!⁴⁸

messenger

The shores of Salamis, and all the region near them, are full of
corpses wretchedly slain.

chorus

Raise a crying voice of woe
for the wretched fate of <our loved ones>,⁴⁹
for the way <the gods> have caused
total disaster! Aiai, for our destroyed army!

47 The transposition of the Messenger's two responses (proposed by J. Stavridès, *Quelques remarques critiques sur les Perses d'Eschyle* [Paris, 1890] 11-14, and again by K. Sier, *Hermes* 133 [2005] 410-4) is necessary; there is nothing in 272-3 (below), nor earlier, to reveal to the chorus that the catastrophic battle was fought at sea, yet 274-7 shows that they have been told this.

48 The Persians' luxurious garments (comparable to the δάπλακα . . . καλὴν πορφύρεην that Odysseus was given by his supposed Cretan host, *Odyssey* 19.241-2) have become their funeral robes—except that they will have no funerals. Attractive, however, is Stavridès' emendation πλαγκτοῖς ἐν πινάκεσσιν "among the drifting planks" (cf. *Odyssey* 12.67).

49 The text has been corrupted by the intrusion of annotations from the margin; I translate a suggestion of West's (*Studies* 81).

AESCHYLUS

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὦ πλεῖστον ἔχθος ὄνομα Σαλαμῖνος κλύειν
 285 φεῦ, τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὡς στένω μεμνημένος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀν. γ. στυγναί γε δὴ δαίσις
 μεμνήσθαι τοι πάρα,
 ὡς Περσίδων πολλὰς μάταν
 εὐνίδας ἔκτισσαν ἢ δ' ἀνάνδρους.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

290 σιγῶ πάλαι δύστηνος ἐκτεπληγμένη
 κακοῖς· ὑπερβάλλει γὰρ ἦδε συμφορά,
 τὸ μήτε λέξαι μήτ' ἐρωτῆσαι πάθη.
 ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη πημονὰς βροτοῖς φέρειν
 θεῶν διδόντων· πᾶν δ' ἀναπτύξας πάθος
 295 λέξον καταστάς, καὶ στένεις κακοῖς ὅμως·
 τίς οὐ τέθηκε, τίνα δὲ καὶ πενθήσομεν
 τῶν ἀρχαίων, ὅστ' ἐπὶ σκηπτουχία
 ταχθεὶς ἄνδρον τάξιν ἡρήμου θανάων;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

Ξέρξης μὲν αὐτὸς ζῇ τε καὶ φάος βλέπει—

286 γε δὴ Comradt: γ' (δ' b' k, θ' b', om. b) Ἀθῆναι vel sim. codd.

288 Περσίδων πολλὰς Weil: πολλὰς Περσίδων codd.

289 εὐνίδας ἔκτισσαν Boeckh: ἔκτισαν εὐνίδας vel sim. codd.

PERSIANS

messenger

How utterly loathsome is the name of Salamis to my ears! Ah, how I
 groan when I remember Athens!⁵⁰

chorus

She is indeed hateful to her foes:
 we can remember well
 how many Persian women they caused
 to be bereaved and widowed, all for nothing.⁵¹

queen [to the MESSENGER]

I have been silent all this time because I was struck dumb with
 misery by this catastrophe. The event is so monstrous that one can
 neither speak nor ask about the sufferings it involved. Still, we
 mortals have no choice but to endure the sorrows the gods send us; so
 compose yourself and speak, revealing all that has happened, even if
 you are groaning under the weight of the disaster. Who has survived,
 and which of the leaders of the host must we mourn, who after being
 assigned to hold a staff of command perished and so left his post
 deserted and unmanned?

messenger

Well, Xerxes himself is alive and sees the light of day—

50 This passage, and 824, suggest that the tale was already current of how,
 after the burning of Sardis, Darius ordered a slave to say to him thrice every day
 before dinner "Master, remember the Athenians" (Herodotus 5.105).

51 Referring mainly to Marathon (cf. 236, 244): μάταν, which has often
 been queried (e.g. West, *Studies* 81–82), is to be understood from the Persian
 point of view—their women's husbands and sons were killed in a futile cause.

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

300 ἔμοῖς μὲν εἶπας δώμασιν φάος μέγα
καὶ λευκὸν ἥμαρ νυκτὸς ἐκ μελαγχίμου.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

Ἀρτεμβάρης δὲ μυρίας ἵππου βραβεὺς
στόφλους παρ' ἀκτὰς θείνεται Σιληνιαῶν
χῶ χιλίαρχος Δαδάκης πληγῇ δορὸς
305 πῆδημα κοῦφον ἐκ νεῶς ἀφήλατο·
Τενάγων τ' ἄριστος Βακτρίων ἰθαγενὴς
θαλασσόπληκτον νῆσον Αἴαντος πολεῖ.
Λύλαιος Ἀρσάμης τε κάργηστης τρίτος,
οἶδ' ἀμφὶ νῆσον τὴν πελειοθρέμμονα
310 νικώμενοι κύρισσον ἰσχυρὰν χθόνα,
311 πηγαῖς τε Νεῦλου γειτονῶν Αἴγυπτίου
313 Φαρνοῦχος, οἳ τε ναὸς ἐκ μᾶς πέσον
312 Ἀρκετὺς, Ἀδεύης, καὶ Φερεσσεύης τρίτος,
315 ἵππου μελαίνης ἡγεμῶν τρισμυρίας.
314 Χρυσεὺς Μάταλλος μυριόνταρχος θανὼν
316 πυρσὴν ζαπληθῇ δάσκιον γενειάδα
ἔτεγγ', ἀμείβων χροῶτα πορφυρᾷ βαφῇ.

PERSIANS

queen

To my house at least your words come as a great relief,⁵² like bright day shining out after a pitch-dark night.

messenger

But Artembares, the commander of ten thousand horse, is being pounded against the rugged shores of Sileniae;⁵³ Dadaces, commander of a thousand, was struck by a spear and took an effortless leap out of his ship; and the excellent Tenagon, a noble of the Bactrians, now wanders around⁵⁴ the wave-beaten island of Ajax. Lilaeus, Arsames, and Argestes, these three vanquished men were beating their heads against the hard rocks around the island where doves breed,⁵⁵ as was Pharnuchus, whose home was near the stream of Egyptian Nile, and three who fell from one ship, Arcteus, Adeues and Pheresseues, leader of thirty thousand dark-skinned horsemen.⁵⁶ Matallus of Chrysa,⁵⁷ commander of ten thousand, perished; his full, bushy, reddish beard got a soaking, and a purple dye⁵⁸ changed the

313, 312 transposed by Merkel.

315, 314 transposed by Heimsoeth.

52 lit. "light".

53 According to the scholia (as emended with the help of Hesychius), this name was given to a part of the coastline of Salamis near "Trophy Point". Probably the reference is to one side of the long peninsula of Cynosura at the eastern extremity of the island.

54 πολεῖ would normally imply wandering or ranging across the actual territory of the island, but here the context, and the audience's knowledge, make it clear that what is meant is that Tenagon's corpse is drifting around its shores.

55 This may be another way of describing Salamis, or may designate a small island in its vicinity.

56 This line (315) is clearly out of place where it stands in the mss., since Matallus could not be described both as a "commander of ten thousand" and as a "leader of thirty thousand".

57 Possibly the town of this name in the Troad is meant (cf. Iliad 1.37), or possibly the place-name ("city of gold") is an invented one (cf. the "Golden Mountains" of Persia in Aristophanes, Acharnians 82).

58 sc. of blood.

AESCHYLUS

- καὶ Μᾶγος Ἀραβὸς Ἀρτάβης τε Βάκτριος,
 σκληρᾶς μέτοικος γῆς, ἐκεῖ κατέφθιτο.
 320 Ἀμιστρίσ Αμφιστρεὺς τε πολύπονον δόρυ
 νωμῶν, ὃ τ' ἐσθλὸς Ἀριόμαρδος ἄρδεσιν
 πένθος παρασχόν, Σεισάμης θ' ὁ Μύσιος,
 Θάρυβίς τε πεντήκοντα πεντάκις νεῶν
 ταγός, γένος Λυρναῖος, εὖειδής ἀνὴρ,
 325 κεῖται θανὼν δεῦλαιος οὐ μάλ' εὐτυχῶς·
 Σύννεσις τε, πρῶτος εἰς εὐψυχίαν,
 Κίλικων ἄπαρχος, εἷς ἀνὴρ πλεῖστον πόνον
 ἐχθροῖς παρασχόν, εὐκλεῶς ἀπώλετο.
 τοσόνδ' ἐπαρχόντων ὑπεμνήσθην πέρι·
 330 πολλῶν παρόντων δ' ὀλίγ' ἀπαγγέλλω κακά.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

- αἰαῖ, κακῶν ὕψιστα δὴ κλύω τάδε,
 αἴσχη τε Πέρσαις καὶ λεγέα κοκκύματα.
 ἀτὰρ φράσον μοι τοῦτ' ἀναστρέψας πάλιν·
 πόσον νεῶν δὴ πλῆθος ἦν Ἑλληνίδων,
 335 ὥστ' ἀξιώσαι Περσικῷ στρατεύματι
 μάχην ξυνάψαι ναῖοισιν ἐμβολαῖς;

321 ἄρδεσι (v) Bothe: Σάρδεσι codd.

322 θ' k: om. M I b k. | 326 Σύννεσις Turnebus: σύννεσις M b: σύνσις vel
 sim. I b k.

329 τοσόνδ' ἐπαρχόντων Heimsöeth: τοιῶνδ' (τοιῶνδ' γ' z) ἀρχόντων (M b
 k: νῦν add. I b k) codd.

334 νεῶν δὴ πλῆθος ἦν Musgrave: δὴ (δὲ b' k) πλῆθος ἦν νεῶν codd.

PERSIANS

colour of his skin. And Magus the Arab and Artabes the Bactrian,
 now a permanent resident in a harsh country, perished there too; and
 Amistris, and Amphistreus who wielded a spear that caused much
 trouble, and brave Ariomardus who dispensed grief with his arrows,
 and Seisames the Mysian, and Tharybis, admiral of five times fifty
 ships, a Lynnaean by birth⁵⁹ and a handsome man, lies wretchedly
 dead, having enjoyed no very good fortune. And Syennesis,⁶⁰
 foremost in courage, the leader of the Cilicians, who gave more
 trouble to the enemy than any other single man, met a glorious end.
 All this I report about the commanders; but I have mentioned only a
 small part of the great suffering that there was.

queen

Aiai, this is truly the most towering disaster I have ever heard of, a
 cause for shame and for shrill wailing to the Persians! But go back to
 the beginning and tell me this: how great were the actual numbers of
 the Greek ships, that they thought themselves capable of joining
 battle with the Persian fleet and ramming their vessels?

59 This adjective should derive from a place-name Lyra; ancient scholars
 knew of no such place, and could only suggest that it was an abbreviated form of
 Lynessus in the Troad (cf. n. 57).

60 Syennesis is the only member of Xerxes' expedition named in the play,
 except the King himself, who can be firmly identified with an actual person. This
 "name" was the title of all the kings of Cilicia (in south-eastern Asia Minor), and
 its contemporary bearer led the Cilician contingent of Xerxes' fleet (Herodotus
 7.98).

AESCHYLUS

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

πλήθους μὲν ἂν σάφ' ἴσθ' ἑκατι βαρβάρων
ναῦς ἂν κρατῆσαι. καὶ γὰρ Ἑλλήσιν μὲν ἦν
ὁ πᾶς ἀριθμὸς εἰς τριακάδας δέκα

- 340 ναῶν, δεκάς δ' ἦν τῶνδε χωρὶς ἑκκριτος·
Ξέρξης δέ, καὶ γὰρ οἶδα, χυλῖας μὲν ἦν
ἂν ἦγε πλήθος, αἱ δ' ὑπέρκοποι τάχει
ἑκατὸν δις ἦσαν ἑπτὰ θ'· ὧδ' ἔχει λόγος,
μή σοι δοκοῦμεν τῇδε λειφθῆναι μάχης;
345 ἀλλ' ὧδε δαίμων τις κατέφθειρε στρατὸν,
τάλαντα βρίσας οὐκ ἰσορρόπῳ τύχῃ.
θεοὶ πόλιν σφύζουσι Παλλάδος θεᾶς.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ἔτ' ἄρ' Ἀθηναίων ἐστ' ἀπόρθητος πόλις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἔρκος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλές.

338 ναῦς ἂν Heimsoeth: ναυσὶ codd.

342 ὑπέρκοποι Wakefield: ὑπέρκομποι codd., Plutarch Themistocles 14.1.

344 μάχης Todt: μάχη codd.

PERSIANS

messenger

I assure you that, so far as numbers are concerned, the fleet of the Easterners would have prevailed. The Greeks had a grand total of about three hundred ships,⁶¹ and ten of these formed a special select squadron; whereas Xerxes—I know this for sure—had a thousand under his command, and those of outstanding speed numbered two hundred and seven.⁶² Such is the reckoning; I hardly imagine you'll consider we were inferior in that respect in the battle! It was some divinity that destroyed our fleet like this, weighting the scales so that fortune did not fall out even: the gods have saved the city of the goddess Pallas.

queen

Then the city of Athens is still unsacked?

messenger

While she has her men, her defences are secure.⁶³

61 lit. "ten thirties of ships". Herodotus (8.43–48) gives the total of the Greek fleet as 385, of which 180 were Athenian. The Persian messenger cannot of course give an exact figure, and Aeschylus rounds down rather than up so as to maximize the disparity between the two fleets.

62 The natural way of understanding this is to take the 207 extra-fast ships to be part of the total of 1000, just as the ten ships of the Greek elite squadron are part of their total of 300. Herodotus (7.89. 1, 7.184.1) seems to have read the passage otherwise, for he gives the total numbers of the Persian fleet, when it first reached Greece, as precisely 1207; they suffered, however, according to his narrative, severe losses before Salamis (by storm, and in the battle of Artemisium), and at Salamis they did not greatly outnumber the Greeks (8.13; contrast 8.66 where he implausibly claims that the losses were made good by reinforcements from subjugated Greek states).

63 This either alludes to, or else it inspired, the story of Themistocles' retort to the Corinthian Adeimantus at the Greek council of war which finally decided to stand and fight at Salamis. Adeimantus had tried to silence Themistocles, and prevent his proposal being put to a vote, because Themistocles was "a man without a city", Attica having been evacuated by its population, its territory occupied by the Persians, and the city sacked and burned; to which Themistocles replied "We have a city and a country greater than yours, while we have two hundred ships and their crews" (Herodotus 8.61).

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

- 350 ἀρχὴ δὲ ναυσὶ συμβολῆς τίς ἦν φράσον·
 τίνες κατήρξαν, πότερον Ἑλλήνες, μάχης,
 ἢ παῖς ἐμός, πλήθει καταυχήσας νεῶν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

- ἤρξεν μὲν, ὦ δέσποινα, τοῦ παντός κακοῦ
 φανείς ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν.
 355 ἀνὴρ γὰρ Ἑλλήν ἐξ Ἀθηναίων στρατοῦ
 ἐλθὼν ἔλεξε παιδί σῶ Ξέρξη τάδε,
 ὥς εἰ μελαίνης νυκτὸς ἵζεται κνέφας,
 Ἑλλήνες οὐ μενοῖεν, ἀλλὰ σέλμασιν
 ναῶν ἐπανθορόντες ἄλλος ἄλλοσε
 360 δρασμῶ κρυφαίῳ βίοντον ἐκωσοῖατο.
 ὁ δ' εὐθύς ὥς ἤκουσεν, οὐ ξυνεῖς δόλον
 Ἑλληνος ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ τὸν θεῶν φθόνον,
 πᾶσιν προφωνεῖ τόνδε ναυάρχους λόγον·
 εὖτ' ἂν φλέγων ἀκτῖσιν ἥλιος χθόνα
 365 λήξῃ, κνέφας δὲ τέμενος αἰθέρος λάβῃ,
 τάξαι νεῶν στίφος μὲν ἐν στοίχοις τρισὶν
 ἔκπλους φυλάσσειν καὶ πόρους ἀλιπρόθους,
 ἄλλας δὲ κύκλῳ νῆσον Αἴαντος πέριξ·
 ὥς εἰ μόρον φευξοῖαθ' Ἑλλήνες κακόν,
 370 ναυσὶν κρυφαίως δρασμὸν εὐρόντες τινα,
 πᾶσι στερέσθαι κρατὸς ἦν προκειμένον.
 τοσαῦτ' ἔλεξε, κάρθ' ὑπ' εὐθύμου φρενός·
 οὐ γὰρ τὸ μέλλον ἐκ θεῶν ἠπίστατο·

360 ἐκωσοῖατο Monk: ἐκωσαιατο (-τον b') codd.

PERSIANS

queen

But tell me how the naval battle began. Who started the fight? Was it the Greeks, or was it my son, proudly confident in the superior numbers of his fleet?

messenger

The start of all our sorrows, mistress, was the appearance from somewhere of an avenging demon or an evil spirit. A Greek man came from the Athenian fleet⁶⁴ and told your son Xerxes that when the gloom of black night should come on, the Greeks would not stay where they were, but would leap on to the benches of their ships and seek to save their lives by taking to flight in all directions under cover of the darkness. As soon as he heard this, not understanding the deceit of the Greek or the jealousy of the gods, he proclaimed the following order to all his admirals. When the sun ceased to burn the earth with its rays, and darkness took hold of the celestial regions, they were to arrange the mass of their ships in three lines and guard the exits⁶⁵ and the surging straits, while stationing others so as to surround the island of Ajax completely;⁶⁶ because if the Greeks should escape grim death by finding some means of escaping unnoticed with their ships, it was decreed that all the admirals were to lose their heads. So much he said, speaking from a very cheerful heart, because he did not understand what the gods were about to do; and they, obediently

64 This was the slave Sicinnus, bringing a message from his master Themistocles (Herodotus 8.75).

65 sc. from the bay of Eleusis north of Salamis, especially the straits at the eastern end of the island (cf. Herodotus 8.76.1).

66 And, in particular, to watch the western exit from the bay, on the Megarian side (ibid.)

AESCHYLUS

- οἱ δ' οὐκ ἀκόσμως, ἀλλὰ πειθάρχῳ φρενὶ
 375 δεῦπνόν τ' ἐπορσύνοντο, ναυβάτης τ' ἀνὴρ
 τροποῦτο κώπην σκαλμὸν ἀμφ' εὐήρετμον.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ φέγγος ἡλίου κατέφθιτο
 καὶ νύξ ἐπῆει, πᾶς ἀνὴρ κώπης ἀναξ
 εἰς ναῦν ἐχώρει πᾶς θ' ὅπλων ἐπιστάτης·
 380 τάξις δὲ τάξιν παρεκάλει νεὸς μακρᾶς,
 πλέουσι δ' ὥς ἕκαστος ἦν τεταγμένος·
 καὶ πάννυχτοι δὴ διάπλοον καθίστασαν
 ναῶν ἄνακτες πάντα ναυτικὸν λεῶν.
 καὶ νύξ ἐχώρει, κού μάλ' Ἑλλήνων στρατὸς
 385 κρυφαῖον ἔκπλουν οὐδαμῇ καθίστατο·
 ἐπεὶ γε μέντοι λευκόπαιλος ἡμέρα
 πᾶσαν κατέσχε γαῖαν εὐφρογῆς ἰδεῖν,
 πρῶτον μὲν ἡχῇ κέλαδος Ἑλλήνων πάρα
 μολπηδὸν ἠυφώμησεν, ὄρθιον δ' ἅμα
 390 ἀντηλάλαξε νησιώτιδος πέτρας
 ἡχώ· φόβος δὲ πᾶσι βαρβάροις παρῆν
 γνώμης ἀποσφαλεῖσιν· οὐ γὰρ ὥς φυγῇ
 παιῶν' ἐφύμνουν σεμνὸν Ἑλληνες τότε,
 ἀλλ' εἰς μάχην ὀρμῶντες εὐνύχῳ θράσει·
 395 σάλπιγξ δ' αὐτῇ πάντ' ἐκεῖν' ἐπέφλεγεν.
 εὐθύς δὲ κώπης ῥοθιάδος ζυνεμβολῇ
 ἔπαισαν ἄλμην βρύχιον ἐκ κελεύματος,
 θοῶς δὲ πάντες ἦσαν ἐκφανεῖς ἰδεῖν
 τὸ δεξιὸν μὲν πρῶτον εὐτάκτως κέρας

375 δεῦπνόν τ' z: δεῦπνον MI b k.

PERSIANS

and in good order, prepared their supper, and each crew member fastened his oar by its loop to a thole-pin well designed for good rowing.⁶⁷ When the light of the sun disappeared and night came on, every master of the oar and every man-at-arms⁶⁸ went on board his ship; one rank encouraged another all along each vessel, and they sailed as each captain had been directed. All through the night, the masters of the fleet kept the whole naval host sailing to and fro. The night wore on, but the Greek force did not attempt a clandestine break-out in any direction at all. Instead, when Day with her white horses⁶⁹ spread her brilliant light over all the earth, first of all there rang out loudly a joyful sound of song from the Greeks, and simultaneously the echo of it resounded back from the cliffs of the island. All we Easterners were terrified, because we had been deceived in our expectation: the Greeks were now raising the holy paeon-song, not with a view to taking flight, but in the act of moving out to battle, with cheerful confidence, and the call of the trumpet was setting the whole place ablaze. At once, on a word of command, they all pulled their oars together, struck the deep sea-water and made it roar—and then suddenly they were all there in plain sight. First there was the right wing, leading the way

67 On these details of the trireme rower's equipment, see J. S. Morrison and R. T. Williams, *Greek Oared Ships 900–322 BC* (Cambridge, 1968) 152, 269, 284.

68 i.e. marine (the prose word would be ἐπιβάτης).

69 Cf. *Odyssey* 23.243–6 where Athene prevents the Dawn-goddess from “yoking the swift horses, Lampon and Phaëthon, who convey [her] and bring light to men”.

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

- 400 ἡγεῖτο κόσμῳ, δεύτερον δ' ὁ πᾶς στόλος
 ἐπεξεχώρει, καὶ παρῆν ὁμοῦ κλύειν
 πολλὴν βοήν· “ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἴτε,
 ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ', ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ
 παῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τε πατρώων ἔδη,
 405 θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών”·
 καὶ μὴν παρ' ἡμῶν Περσίδος γλώσσης ῥόθος
 ὑπηντίαζε, κούκ' ἦν μέλλειν ἀκμή.
 εὐθύς δὲ ναῦς ἐν νηὶ χαλκῇρ' στόλον
 ἔπαισεν· ἦρξε δ' ἐμβολῆς Ἑλληνικῇ
 410 ναῦς, κάποθραύει πάντα Φοινίσσης νεῶς
 κόρυμβ'· ἐπ' ἄλλην δ' ἄλλος ἠϋθυνεν δόρυ.
 τὰ πρῶτα μὲν νυν ῥεῦμα Περσικοῦ στρατοῦ
 ἀντεῖχεν· ὥς δὲ πλήθος ἐν στενῷ νεῶν
 ἦθροιστ', ἀρωγὴ δ' οὔτις ἀλλήλοισι παρῆν,
 415 αὐτοὶ δ' ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐμβολαῖς χαλκοστόμοις
 παίοντ', ἔθραυον πάντα κωπήρ' στόλον,
 Ἑλληνικαὶ τε νῆες οὐκ ἀφρασμόνως
 κύκλῳ πέριξ ἔθεινον· ὑπτιοῦτο δὲ
 σκάφη νεῶν, θάλασσα δ' οὐκέτ' ἦν ἰδεῖν,
 420 ναυαγίων πλήθουσα καὶ φόνῳ βροτῶν·
 ἀκταὶ δὲ νεκρῶν χοιράδες τ' ἐπλήθυον.
 φυγῇ δ' ἀκόσμῳ πᾶσα ναῦς ἠρέσσετο,
 ὅσαυτ' ἦσαν βαρβάρου στρατεύματος·
 τοὶ δ' ὥστε θύννους ἢ τιν' ἰχθύων βόλον
 425 ἀγαῖσι κωπῶν θραύμασιν τ' ἐρεπτίαν

422 ἀκόσμῳ b: ἀκόσμως MI b k.

with good order and discipline, and then the whole fleet coming on behind, and from all of them together one could hear a great cry: “Come on, sons of the Greeks, for the freedom of your homeland, for the freedom of your children, your wives, the temples of your fathers’ gods, and the tombs of your ancestors! Now all is at stake!” And likewise from our side there was a surge of Persian speech in reply; the time for delay was past. At once one ship began to strike another with its projecting bronze beak; the first to ram was a Greek ship,⁷⁰ which sheared off the whole stern of a Phoenician vessel, and then each captain chose a different enemy ship at which to run his own. At first the streaming Persian force resisted firmly; but when our masses of ships were crowded into a narrow space, they had no way to come to each other’s help, they got struck by their own side’s bronze-pointed rams, they had the whole of their oarage smashed, and the Greek ships, with careful coordination, surrounded them completely and went on striking them. The hulls of our ships turned keel-up, and the sea surface was no longer visible, filled as it was with the wreckage of ships and the slaughter of men; the shores and reefs were also full of corpses. Every remaining ship of the Eastern armada was being rowed away in disorderly flight; meanwhile the enemy were clubbing men and splitting their spines with broken pieces of oars and spars from the wreckage, as if they were tunny or some other catch of

⁷⁰ That of the Athenian, Ameinias of Pallene, according to Herodotus 8.84.1.

AESCHYLUS

- ἔπαιον, ἐρράχιζον· οἰμωγὴ δ' ὁμοῦ
κακύμασιν κατεῖχε πελαγίαν ἅλα,
ἕως κελαινὸν νυκτὸς ὄμι' ἀφεύλετο.
κακῶν δὲ πλήθος, οὐδ' ἂν εἰ δέκ' ἤματα
430 στοιχηγοροίην, οὐκ ἂν ἐκπλήσαιμί σοι·
εὖ γὰρ τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδ' ἄμ' ἡμέρα μᾶ
πλήθος τοσουτάριθμον ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

αἰαῖ, κακῶν δὴ πέλαγος ἔρρωγεν μέγα
Πέρσαις τε καὶ πρόπαντι βαρβάρων γένει.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

- 435 εὖ νυν τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδέπω μεσοῦν κακόν·
τοιᾶδ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἦλθε συμφορὰ πάθους
ὥς τοῖσδε καὶ δις ἀντισηκῶσαι ῥοπή.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

- καὶ τίς γένοιτ' ἂν τῆσδ' ἔτ' ἐχθίων τύχη;
λέξον τίν' αὖ φῆς τήνδε συμφορὰν στρατῶ
440 ἐλθεῖν, κακῶν ῥέπουσαν εἰς τὰ μάσσονα.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

Περσῶν ὅσοιτερ ἦσαν ἀκμαῖοι φύσιν
ψυχὴν τ' ἄριστοι κευγένειαν ἐκπρεπεῖς,
αὐτῶ τ' ἀνακτι πίστιν ἐν πρώτοις ἀεὶ
τεθναῖσιν αἰσχροῦς δυσκλεεστάτῳ πότμῳ.

428 κελαινὸν b: κελαινήs MI b k.

431 μηδ' ἄμ' b (?) κ: μηδ' ἂν MI b k.

444 πότμῳ b: μόρῳ MI b k.

PERSIANS

fish,⁷¹ and a mixture of shrieking and wailing filled the expanse of the sea, until the dark face of night blotted it out. Our sufferings were so multitudinous that I could not describe them fully to you if I were to talk for ten days on end: you can be certain that never have so vast a number of human beings perished in a single day.

queen

Aiai, what a great sea of troubles has burst upon the Persians and the whole Eastern race!

messenger

Well, be sure of this, the tale of disaster is not yet even half told: such a calamitous event has occurred, on top of what I have told you, that it outweighs that in the scale fully twice over.

queen

What possible misfortune could be even more hateful than the one we have heard of? Tell us what you say is this further disaster that has come upon the army that weighs even more heavily in the scale of evil.

messenger

All those Persians who were in their bodily prime, outstanding in courage, notable for high birth, and who always showed the highest degree of loyalty to the person of the King, have perished shamefully by a most ignoble fate.

⁷¹ Tunny were caught in huge shoals, and, being a very large fish, had to be killed by clubbing or spearing after being netted. In an unknown play of Aeschylus (fr. 307) a man is described as having endured a savage beating "without a groan, like a voiceless tunny-fish". Cf. Manilius, *Astronomica* 5.658–675, and see A. Dalby, *Food in the Ancient World from A to Z* (London, 2003) 333–7.

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

445 οἱ ἔγω τάλαίνα συμφορᾶς κακῆς, φίλοι
ποιῶ μόρω δὲ τούσδε φῆς ὀλωλέναι;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

νῆσός τις ἐστὶ πρόσθε Σαλαμῖνος τόπων,
βαιά, δύσορμος ναυσίν, ἣν ὁ φιλόχορος
Πᾶν ἐμβατεύει ποντίας ἀκτῆς ἔπι.
450 ἐνταῦθα πέμπει τούσδ', ὅπως, ὅτ' ἐκ νεῶν
φθαρέντες ἐχθροὶ νῆσον ἐκωζοῖατο,
κτείνουσιν εὐχείρωτον Ἑλλήνων στρατόν,
φίλους δ' ὑπεκσφάζουσιν ἐναλίων πόρων,
κακῶς τὸ μέλλον ἱστορῶν. ὥς γὰρ θεὸς
455 ναῶν ἔδωκε κῦδος Ἑλλήσιν μάχης,
αὐθημερὸν φάρξαντες εὐχάλκοις δέμας
ὅπλοισι ναῶν ἐξέθρῳσκον, ἀμφὶ δὲ
κυκλοῦντο πᾶσαν νῆσον, ὥστ' ἀμυχανεῖν
ὅποι τράποιντο· πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ χειρῶν
460 πέτροισιν ἠράσσοντο, τοξικῆς τ' ἀπὸ
θώμιγγος ἰοὶ προσπίτνοντες ὄλλυσαν·
τέλος δ' ἐφορμηθέντες ἐς ἐνὸς ῥόθου
παίουσι, κρεοκοποῦσι δυστήνων μέλη,

450 ὅτ' ἐκ Elmsley: ὅταν vel sim. codd.

PERSIANS

queen

Ah, wretched me, my friends, this terrible catastrophe! By what kind of death do you say they have perished?

messenger

There is an island in front of Salamis,⁷² small and offering no good anchorage for ships, whose seashore is a haunt of Pan, lover of dances.⁷³ Xerxes sent these men there so that, when shipwrecked enemy men were trying to reach safety on the island, they could kill the Greek warriors when they were an easy prey while rescuing their own men from the straits of the sea; he was reading the future badly. When god had given the triumph in the naval battle to the Greeks, that same day they clad themselves in stout bronze armour, leaped off their ships, and landed all around the island, so that the Persians had no idea which way to turn. They were being heavily battered by hand-thrown stones, and hit and killed by arrows shot from the bowstring, until finally the Greeks charged them in a simultaneous rush and struck them down, hacking the wretched men's limbs

72 This island was Psyttaleia, on which, according to Herodotus (8.76.1–2), Xerxes stationed “many of the Persians” (Pausanias 1.36.2 gives the number as about 400) with the same objective as is stated here; they were killed to the last man by an Athenian hoplite force, led by Aristides, which crossed over from Salamis while the naval battle was in progress (Herodotus 8.95). In Aeschylus’ treatment, on the other hand, the Greek attack on the island is made immediately after the naval battle, and by the same men who had fought it. Psyttaleia has been identified in modern times, sometimes with the island now officially so named (formerly Lipsokoutali) between Cynosura and the Peiraeus, sometimes with the island of Aghios Georgios in the bay north of Salamis town.

73 Pausanias loc.cit. noted that there were many roughly-carved wooden images of Pan on the island.

AESCHYLUS

ἕως ἀπάντων ἐξαπέφθειραν βίον.

- 465 Ξέρξης δ' ἀνώμαζεν κακῶν ὁρῶν βάθος
 ἔδραν γὰρ εἶχε παντός εὐαγῆ στρατοῦ,
 ὑψηλὸν ὄχθον ἄγχι πελαγίας ἀλός·
 ῥήξας δὲ πέπλους κἀνακωκύσας λιγύ,
 πεζῶ παραγγεῖλας ἄφαρ στρατεύματι,
 470 ἦσ' ἀκόσμως ξὺν φυγῇ. τοιάνδε τοι
 πρὸς τῇ πάροιθε συμφορᾷ πάρα στένειν.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

- ὦ στυγνὲ δαῖμον, ὥς ἄρ' ἔψευσας φρενῶν
 Πέρσας· πικρὰν δὲ παῖς ἐμὸς τιμωρίαν
 κλεινῶν Ἀθηναίων ἡὔρε, κούκ ἀπήρκεσαν
 475 οὓς πρόσθε Μαραθῶν βαρβάρων ἀπώλεσεν·
 ὧν ἀντίποινα παῖς ἐμὸς πράζειν δοκῶν
 τοσόνδε πλήθος πημάτων ἐπέσπασεν.
 σὺ δ' εἰπέ, ναῶν αἷ πεφεύγασιν μόρον,
 ποῦ τάσδ' ἔλειπες; οἶσθα σημῆναι τορῶς;

ΑΓΤΕΛΟΣ

- 480 ναῶν δὲ ταγοὶ τῶν λελειμμένων σύδην
 κατ' οὔρον οὐκ εὐκοσμον αἶρονται φυγῇ.
 στρατός δ' ὁ λοιπὸς ἐν τε Βοιωτῶν χθονὶ
 διώλλυθ', οἱ μὲν ἀμφὶ κρηναῖον γάνος
 δίψη πονοῦντες, <οἱ δὲ
 >· οἱ δ' ὑπ' ἄσματος κενοῦ

470 τοι West: σοι codd.

474 ἀπήρκεσαν b k: ἀπήρκεσε(ν) M I b.

481 αἶρονται Elmsley: αἶροῦνται M: αἶροῦνται vel sim. I b k.

484 lacuna posited by Roussel. κενοῦ Diggle: κενοὶ codd.

PERSIANS

until they had extinguished the life of every one of them. Xerxes wailed aloud when he saw this depth of disaster; he was seated in plain sight of the whole army, on a high cliff close to the sea. He tore his robes, uttered a piercing cry of grief, and immediately gave an order to the land army, sending them off in helter-skelter flight. Such, I tell you, is the disaster you have to mourn, in addition to the previous one.

queen

O cruel divinity, how I see you have beguiled the minds of the Persians! My son has found his vengeance upon famous Athens to be a bitter one; the Eastern lives that Marathon had already destroyed were not enough for him. My son, in the belief that he was going to inflict punishment for that, has drawn upon himself this great multitude of sorrows. But tell me—those of the ships that escaped destruction—where did you leave them? Do you know enough to give us clear information?

messenger

The commanders of the remaining ships took to headlong, disorderly flight, running before the wind. The rest of the host⁷⁴ suffered continual losses, first of all in the land of the Boeotians, some of them prostrated by thirst when close to a sparkling spring, <others by hunger>,⁷⁵ while we survivors,

⁷⁴ i.e. the land army.

⁷⁵ Or possibly disease (cf. Herodotus 8.115.3), which is not, however, otherwise mentioned in this speech, whereas hunger and thirst make a natural pair and appear together in 489–491.

AESCHYLUS

- 485 διεκπερώμεν εἰς τε Φωκέων χθόνα
καὶ Δωρίδ' αἶαν Μηλιά τε κόλπον, οὗ
Σπερχειὸς ἄρδει πεδῖον εὐμενεῖ ποτῶ·
κάντεϋθεν ἡμᾶς γῆς Ἀχαιίδος πέδον
καὶ Θεσσαλῶν πόλεις ὑπεσπανισμένους
490 βορᾶς ἐδέξαντ'· ἔνθα δὴ πλεῖστοι θάνον
δίψῃ τε λιμῶ τ'· ἀμφοτέρα γὰρ ἦν τάδε.
Μαγνητικὴν δὲ γαῖαν εἰς τε Μακεδόνων
χώραν ἀφικόμεσθ', ἐπ' Ἀξιοῦ πόρον,
Βόλβης θ' ἔλειον δόνακα, Πάγγαιόν τ' ὄρος,
495 Ἡδωνίδ' αἶαν. νυκτὶ δ' ἐν ταύτῃ θεὸς
χειμῶν' ἄωρον ὥρσα, πῆγνυσιν δὲ πᾶν
ῥέεθρον ἀγνοῦ Στρυμόνος· θεοὺς δέ τις
τὸ πρὶν νομίζων οὐδαμοῦ τότε ἠϋχετο
λιταῖσι, γαῖαν οὐρανόν τε προσκυνῶν.
500 ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλὰ θεοκλυτῶν ἐπαύσατο
στρατός, περᾶ κρυσταλλοπῆγα διὰ πόρον·
χῶστις μὲν ἡμῶν πρὶν σκεδασθῆναι θεοῦ
ἀκτῖνας ὥρμήθη, σεσωμένος κυρεῖ·
φλέγων γὰρ ἀνγαῖς λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος
505 μέσον πόρον διῆκε θερμαίνων φλογί·
πύπτον δ' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἠτύχει δέ τοι

489 πόλεις Schiller: πόλεις M b k (?) ΣΦ: πόλισμ' I b k.

506 ἠτύχει (εὐ-) G.C.W. Schneider: εὐτυχῇ M γρ I k: εὐτυχῆς b: εὐτυχῆς b k.

PERSIANS

out of breath and panting, passed on into the country of the Phocians and the land of Doris and came to the Malian Gulf, where the Spercheius waters the plain and provides drink bountifully. From there the soil of Achaea⁷⁶ received us, and then the cities of Thessaly; we were very short of food, and very many died in those parts from thirst and hunger—we had both of them. Then we reached the land of Magnesia⁷⁷ and entered the country of the Macedonians, coming to the river Axios,⁷⁸ the reed-swamps of Lake Bolbe,⁷⁹ and Mount Pangaeum in the land of Edonia.⁸⁰ That night the god brought on an unseasonable cold snap, and froze the whole stream of holy Strymon; and those who had never before paid any regard to the gods now addressed them with prayers, making obeisance to earth and heaven. When the army had finished its many invocations of the gods, it began to cross the river, now solid ice. Those of us who started across before the Sun-god scattered his rays, got over safely; for the brilliant orb of the Sun, with his blazing beams, parted the ice in the middle of the channel,⁸¹ heating it with his flames. The men fell one on top of another, and he was lucky, I tell you,

76 That is, Achaea Phthiotis, on the north shore of the Malian Gulf.

77 The north-eastern coastal region of Thessaly, dominated by Mount Ossa.

78 This river, which flows across Macedonia into the Thermaic Gulf, marks approximately the point at which the Persians' line of march turned from north to east.

79 This lake formed part of the boundary between the Chalcidic region to the south of it, with its Greek colonies, and the Macedonian kingdom.

80 The mention of Mount Pangaeum is technically out of place, since it lies east of the Strymon; but probably all that is meant is that the army came in sight of the mountain.

81 lit. "caused the middle of the channel to move apart" (δοῆκε is aorist of δαίωμι).

AESCHYLUS

ὅστις τάχιστα πνεῦμ' ἀπέρρηξεν βίου.
 ὅσοι δὲ λοιποὶ κάτυχον σωτηρίας,
 Θρήκην περάσαντες μόγισ πολλῶ πόνῳ
 510 ἤκουσιν ἐκφυγόντες, οὐ πολλοὶ τινες,
 ἐφ' ἐστιοῦχον γαῖαν· ὡς στένειν πόλιν
 Περσῶν, ποθοῦσαν φιλότατην ἥβην χθονός.
 ταῦτ' ἔστ' ἀληθῆ· πολλὰ δ' ἐκλείπω λέγων
 κακῶν ἃ Πέρσαις ἐγκατέσκηψεν θεός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

515 ὦ δυσπρόνῃτε δαῖμον, ὡς ἄγαν βαρὺς
 ποδοῖν ἐνήλου παντὶ Περσικῷ γένει.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

οἱ γὰρ τάλαινα διαπεπραγμένου στρατοῦ.
 ὦ νυκτὸς ὄψις ἐμφανὴς ἐνυπνίων,
 ὡς κάρτα μοι σαφῶς ἐδήλωσας κακά·
 520 ὑμεῖς δὲ φαύλως αὐτ' ἄγαν ἐκρίνατε.
 ὁμῶς, ἐπειδὴ τῇδ' ἐκύρωσεν φάτις
 ὑμῶν, θεοῖς μὲν πρῶτον εὐχασθαι θέλω·
 ἔπειτα Γῇ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς δωρήματα
 ἥξω λαβοῦσα πελανὸν ἐξ οἴκων ἐμῶν,
 525 ἐπίσταμαι μὲν ὡς ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις,
 ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ λουπὸν εἴ τι δὴ λῶον πέλοι.
 ὑμᾶς δὲ χρὴ πῖ τοῖσδε τοῖς πεπραγμένοις
 πιστοῖσι πιστὰ ζυμφέρειν βουλευματα·
 καὶ παῖδ', ἐάνπερ δεῦρ' ἐμοῦ πρόσθεν μόλη,

PERSIANS

who broke off the breath of life soonest. Those who were left and had gained safety crossed Thrace and have now, after escaping with difficulty and with much hard toil, returned to the land of their hearth and home—but not many of them; so that the city of the Persians must grieve, longing vainly for the beloved youth of the land. All this is true; and there is much that I have omitted in my speech of the evils that a god has brought down upon the Persians.

[Exit.]

chorus

O you god who has caused such toil and grief, how very heavily you have leaped and trampled on the entire Persian race!

queen

Ah, wretched me, our army annihilated! O you clear dream-vision of the night, how very plainly you revealed these disasters to me—and you [turning to the chorus], in interpreting the dream, took it far too lightly! All the same, since this was your firm advice,⁸² I intend first to pray to the gods; then I will return, bringing from my palace a rich libation as a gift to Earth and the dead. I know that this is after the event, but it is in the hope that there may be something better to come in the future. For your part, it is your duty, in the light of these events, to offer trusty counsel to us who trust you; and if my son comes here before I

⁸² Cf. 216–220; it is noteworthy that no specific mention is here made of Darius (contrast 220–3 and 620–1).

AESCHYLUS

530 παρηγορεῖτε καὶ προπέμπετ' εἰς δόμους,
μὴ καὶ τι πρὸς κακοῖσι προσθῆται κακόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, νῦν <δὴ> Περσῶν
τῶν μεγαλύνων καὶ πολυάνδρων
στρατιὰν ὀλέσας
535 ἄστν τὸ Σούσαν ἢ δ' Ἀγβατάναν
πένθει δνοφερῷ κατέκρυψας.
πολλαὶ δ' ἀπαλαῖς χερσὶ καλύπτρας
κατερεϊκόμεναι < | >
διαμυδαλέους δάκρυσιν κόλπους
540 τέγγουσ' ἄλγους μετέχουσιν
αἱ δ' ἀβρόγοι Περσίδες ἀνδρῶν
ποθέουσιν ἰδεῖν ἀρτιζυγίαν,
λέκτρων εὐνάς ἀβρογίτωνα,
γλιδανῆς ἥβης τέρπν, ἀφείσαι
545 πενθοῦσιν γόοις ἀκορεστοτάτοις
κάγὼ δὲ μόρον τῶν οἰχομένων
αἶρω δοκίμως πολυπενθῆ.

531 μὴ καὶ τι I b k: καὶ μὴ τι k: μηκέτι M b.

531 προσθῆται vel sim. k: προσθῆτι b: πρόσθητε vel sim. M I b k.

532 νῦν <δὴ> Scholefield: νῦν τῶν b k: νῦν M I b k.

538 lacuna posited by Dindorf, who suggested e.g. <μητέρες οἰκτραί>.

539 διαμυδαλέους b k: διαμυδαλέοις vel sim. M I b k ΣΦ.

PERSIANS

return, comfort him and escort him home, for fear that he may add
some further harm to the harm he has suffered.⁸³

[She leaves, by the way she came.]

chorus

O Zeus the King, now, now by destroying
the army of the boastful
and populous Persian nation
you have covered the city of Susa and Agbatana
with a dark cloud of mourning.
Many <mothers in a piteous plight>⁸⁴
are rending their veils with their delicate hands
and wetting the folds of their garments till they are
soaked through
with tears, as they take their share in the sorrow;
and the soft, wailing Persian women who yearn
to see the men they lately wedded,
abandoning the soft-covered beds they had slept in,
the delight of their pampered youth,
grieve with wailing that is utterly insatiable.
And I too shoulder the burden of the death of the
departed,
truly a theme for mourning far and wide.

83 Probably to be taken as a guarded hint that she fears that Xerxes in his humiliation may commit suicide.

84 I translate the supplement suggested by Dindorf; something of the sort is necessary to identify the women being spoken of here in contrast with the widowed brides of 541–5, who are introduced (note αἱ δ') as a group distinct from them.

AESCHYLUS

στρ. α νῦν γὰρ πρόπασα δὴ στένει
 γαῖ' Ἀσίς ἐκκενουμένα.
 550 Ξέρξης μὲν ἄγαγεν, ποποῖ,
 Ξέρξης δ' ἀπώλεσεν, τοτοῖ,
 Ξέρξης δὲ πάντ' ἐπέσπε δυσφρόνως
 βαρίδες τε πόνται.
 τίττε Δαρεῖος μὲν οὔτω
 555 τότ' ἀβλαβῆς ἐπὶν
 τόξαρχος πολήταις,
 Σουσίδος φίλος ἄκτωρ;

ἀντ. α πεζούς τε καὶ θαλασσίους
 ὁμόπτεροι κυανώπιδες
 560 νᾶες μὲν ἄγαγον, ποποῖ,
 νᾶες δ' ἀπώλεσαν, τοτοῖ,
 νᾶες πανωλέθροισιν ἐμβολαῖς,
 διὰ δ' Ἰαόνων χέρας.
 τυτθὰ δ' ἐκφυγεῖν ἄνακτ'
 565 αὐτόν, ὥς ἀκούομεν,

548 γὰρ x: γὰρ δὴ M I b k.

548 δὴ Sommerstein: μὲν (from 550) codd.

549 Ἀσίς Blomfield: Ἀσίας codd.

553 βαρίδες τε M k (βαρίδες ΣΜ): βαρίδες τε I: βαρίδεςσι b k ΣΦ.

553 πόνται vel sim. M k: ποντίαις I b k.

554 τίττε b (?) x: τίποτε M I b k.

556 πολήταις z: πολήταις M: πολίταις I b k.

557 Σουσίδος Msscr b k: Σουσίδες M: Σουσίδαις vel sim. I b ΣΦ. | 558 τε b

(?) k: γὰρ k (?) x: τε γὰρ M I b k.

559 ὁμόπτεροι Brunck: αἱ δ' ὁμόπτεροι (ὁμο- b') codd.

PERSIANS

For now all, yes all, the emptied land
 of Asia groans:
 Xerxes took them—popoi!
 Xerxes lost them—totoi!
 Xerxes handled everything unwisely,
 he and his sea-boats.
 Why did Darius for his part
 do so little harm⁸⁵ when he was the bowmaster
 who ruled over the citizenry,
 the dear leader of Susiana?

Land-soldiers and seamen—
 the dark-faced,⁸⁶ equal-winged⁸⁷
 ships brought them—popoi!—
 ships destroyed them—totoi!—
 ships, with ruinous ramming,
 and driven by Ionian hands!
 And the King himself,
 so we hear, barely escaped,

85 sc. in comparison to Xerxes; compare Darius' own words at 780–1.

86 The ship's "face" is her prow (cf. the Homeric formula *vsōs* *Κυανοπρόρου*—and, for the metaphor, the "crimson-cheeked ships" of *Odyssey* 11.124 and, in reverse, *καλλιπρωρος* "fair-faced", used of *Parthenopaeus* in *Seven* 533 and of *Iphigeneia* in *Ag.* 235), possibly with allusion to the eyes so often painted on ships' bows.

87 The ship's "wings" are her banks of oars (cf. *Odyssey* 11.125) which are, of course, equal on each side.

AESCHYLUS

Θρήκης ἄμ πεδιήρεις
 δυσχίμους τε κελεύθους.

σπ. β τοὶ δ' ἄρα πρωτομόροιο, φεῦ,
 ληφθέντες πρὸς ἀνάγκας, ἡέ,
 570 ἀκτὰς ἀμφὶ Κυχρείας, ὁἶ,
 ἔρραινται. στένε καὶ δακνά-
 ζου, βαρὺ δ' ἀμβόασον
 οὐράνι' ἄγῃ, ὁἶ,
 τεῖνε δὲ δυσβάυκτον
 575 βοᾷτιν τάλαιναν αὐδάν.

ἀντ. β κναπτόμενοι δ' ἀλὶ δεινὰ, φεῦ,
 σκύλλονται πρὸς ἀναύδων, ἡέ,
 παίδων τὰς ἀμιάντου, ὁἶ.
 πενθεῖ δ' ἄνδρα δόμος στερη-
 580 θεῖς, τοκέες δ' ἄπαιδες

567 δυσχίμους Arnaldus: δυσχειμέρους vel sim. codd.

568 -9 πρωτομόροιο . . . ἀνάγκας Blomfield: πρωτόμοροι . . . ἀνάγκαν vel sim. codd.

571 ἔρραινται (Page: ἔρραινται b ΣΦ, ἔρανται b k, ἔρραται I b, ἄρραινται k, αἶρανται k, ἔρραντες b (?), ἔραντες b, ἔρα M) placed here by Hermann: in codd. it follows ἄπαιδες (580).

576 κναπτόμενοι Bothe: γναπτόμενοι M b k ΣΦ: γναμπτόμενοι I b k.

576 δεινὰ M b k: δεινᾶ vel sim. I b k ΣΦ.

580 see on 571.

PERSIANS

over the wide plains
 and wintry tracks of Thrace.

But those who were seized—pheu!—
 by Necessity and made to die first—ehhh-e!⁸⁸—
 now lie smashed—o-aaah!—
 around the shores of Cychreus' island.⁸⁹ Groan
 and bite your lips, and utter a deep cry
 of towering woe—o-aaah!—
 a terrible, long-drawn-out howl,
 a screaming voice of sorrow.

Terribly lacerated by the sea—pheu!—
 they are being savaged by the voiceless children—ehhhe!—
 of the Undefined⁹⁰—o-aaah!
 Bereaved houses mourn their men,
 and aged parents,

88 This is a long wail, a prolonged vowel [s:] followed by a shorter, slightly closer vowel [e].

89 Cychreus was a Salaminian hero ([Hesiod] fr. 226; Pherecydes fr. 60 Fowler; Diodorus Siculus 4.72.4–7; [Apollodorus], Library 3.12.7; Plutarch, Theseus 10.3, Solon 9.1). He was linked mythically to the family of Telamon and Ajax by being said to have died leaving a daughter who became either the mother or the wife of Telamon. During the battle of Salamis he appeared to the Athenians in the form of a serpent (Pausanias 1.36.1). Sophocles (fr. 579) refers to a “Cychrean rock” on the island.

90 The “Undefined” is the sea, which washes away all ritual pollution and can never become polluted itself; cf. Euripides, Iphigeneia in Tauris 1193, and see R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford, 1983) 226–7. Its “children” are the fish.

AESCHYLUS

δαιμόνι' ἄγῃ, ὅα,
δυρόμενοι γέροντες
τὸ πᾶν δὴ κλύουσιν ἄλγος.

στρ. γ τοι δ' ἀνὰ γᾶν Ἀσίαν δὴν

585 οὐκέτι περσονομοῦνται,
οὐδ' ἔτι δασμοφοροῦσι
δεσποσύνοισιν ἀνάγκαις,
οὐδ' εἰς γᾶν προπίτνοντες
ἄζονται βασιλεία

590 γὰρ διόλωλεν ἰσχὺς.

ἀν. γ οὐδ' ἔτι γλῶσσα βροτοῖσιν
ἐν φυλακαῖς λέλυται γὰρ
λαὸς ἐλεύθερα βάζειν,
ὡς ἐλύθη ζυγὸν ἀλκάς.

595 αἶμαχθεῖσα δ' ἄρουραν
Αἴαντος περικλύστα
νᾶσος ἔχει τὰ Περσᾶν.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

φῖλοι, κακῶν μὲν ὅστις ἔμπειρος κυρεῖ,
ἐπίσταται βροτοῖσιν ὡς ὅταν κλύδων
600 κακῶν ἐπέλθῃ, πάντα δειμαίνεν φιλεῖ
ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὐροῇ, πεποιθέναι

588 οὐδ' Heath: οὐτ' codd.

588 588 προ- k: προσ- M I b k.

589 ἄζονται Halm: ἄρζονται codd.

595 ἄρουραν Porson: ἄρουρα codd.

598 ἔμπειρος b: ἔμπορος M I b k ΣΦ.

PERSIANS

now childless—o-aaah!—
lament their god-sent woes
as they hear the news that brings ultimate pain.

Not long now will those in the land of Asia
remain under Persian rule,
nor continue to pay tribute
under the compulsion of their lords,
nor fall on their faces to the ground
in awed obeisance; for the strength of the monarchy
has utterly vanished.

Nor do men any longer keep their tongue
under guard; for the people
have been let loose to speak with freedom,
now the yoke of military force no longer binds them.
In its blood-soaked soil
the sea-washed isle of Ajax
holds the power of Persia.

[The QUEEN returns, plainly dressed, on foot, and alone, herself
carrying offerings in a tray or basket.]

queen

My friends, anyone who has experience of misfortune knows that in
human affairs, when one is assailed by a surge of troubles, one is apt
to be afraid of anything; whereas when divine favour is flowing your
way, you tend

AESCHYLUS

- τὸν αὐτὸν αἰὲν ἄνεμον οὐριεῖν τύχης.
 ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἤδη πάντα μὲν φόβου πλέα·
 ἐν ὄμμασιν τ' ἀνταῖα φαίνεται θεῶν
 605 βοᾷ τ' ἐν ὧσιν κέλαδος οὐ παιώνιος·
 τοῖα κακῶν ἔκπληξις ἐκφοβεῖ φρένας.
 τοιγὰρ κέλευθον τήνδ' ἄνευ τ' ὀρημάτων
 χλιδῆς τε τῆς πάροιθεν ἐκ δόμων πάλιν
 ἔστευλα, παῖδος πατρὶ πρεφυμένους χοᾶς
 610 φέρουσ', ἅπερ νεκροῖσι μελικτήρια,
 βοός τ' ἀφ' ἀγνῆς λευκὸν εὐποτον γάλα,
 τῆς τ' ἀνθεμουργοῦ στάγμα, παμφαῆς μέλι,
 λιβάσιν ὑδρηλαῖς παρθένου πηγῆς μέτα,
 ἀκήρατόν τε μητρὸς ἀγρίας ἄπο
 615 ποτόν, παλαιᾶς ἀμπέλου γάνος τόδε·
 τῆς τ' αἰὲν ἐν φύλλοισι θαλλούσης βίον
 ξανθῆς ἐλαίας καρπὸς εὐώδης πάρα,
 ἄνθη τε πλεκτά, παμφόρου Γαίας τέκνα.
 ἀλλ', ὦ φίλοι, χοαῖσι ταῖσδε νευτέρων
 620 ὕμνους ἐπευφημεῖτε, τὸν τε δαίμονα
 Δαρεῖον ἀνακαλεῖσθε· γαπότους δ' ἐγὼ
 τιμὰς προπέμψω τάσδε νευτέροις θεοῖς.

602 αἰὲν ἄνεμον Weil: αἰεὶ δαίμον' vel sim. codd.

605 τ' Weil: δ' codd.

PERSIANS

to be sure that the breeze of good fortune will always continue to blow from astern. So for me now, everything is full of fear: before my eyes there appear hostile visions from the gods, and in my ears there resounds a din that is not a song of cheer—such is the stunning effect of these misfortunes that terrifies my mind. That is why I have retraced my path, coming back from my house without my carriage and without my former luxury, bringing propitiatory drink-offerings for the father of my child, such as serve to soothe the dead: white milk, good to drink, from a pure⁹¹ cow; the distilled product of the flower-worker,⁹² gleaming honey, together with a libation of water from a virgin spring; a drink that has come unsullied from its wild-growing mother, this juice of an old vine; and also here are the sweet-smelling produce of the tree whose foliage never ceases to live and flourish, the blond olive-tree,⁹³ and a woven garland of flowers, the children of Earth the bearer of all life.⁹⁴ Now, friends, accompany these drink-offerings to the nether powers with auspicious songs, and call up the divine Darius; meanwhile I will send these honours on their way to the gods below, by letting the earth drink them up.

91 i.e. (probably) never yoked (cf. Bacchylides 11.105, 16.20).

92 i.e. of the bee.

93 Cf. Pindar, Olympian 11.13 and Nemean 1.17, where olive leaves are called “golden”. The “sweet-smelling produce” of the tree will be its oil rather than its actual fruit.

94 As Hall has noted, every one of the six components of the offering is specified as coming from a feminine source—the cow, the bee (μέλισσα), the “virgin” spring, the “mother” vine, the olive-tree (ἐλαία), and Mother Earth.

AESCHYLUS

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- βασίλεια γύναι, πρέσβος Πέρσαις,
 σύ τε πέμπε χοᾶς θαλάμους ὑπο γῆς,
 625 ἡμεῖς θ' ὕμνοις αἰτησόμεθα
 φθιμένων πομπούς
 εὐφρονας εἶναι κατὰ γαίας.
 ἀλλά, χθόνιοι δαίμονες ἄγνοί,
 Γῇ τε καὶ Ἑρμῇ βασιλεῦ τ' ἐνέρων,
 630 πέμψατ' ἐνερθεν ψυχὴν εἰς φῶς
 εἰ γάρ τι κακῶν ἄκος οἶδε πλέον,
 μόνος ἂν θνητῶν πέρας εἴποι.
 σπ. α ἦ ῥ' αἶε μοι μακαρίτας ἰσοδαίμων βασιλεὺς
 635 βάρβαρα σαφηνῇ
 ἰέντος τὰ παναίολ' αἰανῇ
 δύσθροα βήματα;
 παντάλαν' ἄχῃ
 διαβοάσω·
 639 νέρθεν ἄρα κλύει μου;
 ἀντ. α ἀλλὰ σύ μοι, Γᾷ τε καὶ ἄλλοι χθονίων ἀγεμόνες,

PERSIANS

chorus

Royal lady, first in honour among the Persians,
 while you send the drink-offerings down to earth's inner
 chambers,
 we in song will beseech
 those with power to send up the dead
 to be kind to us in their home beneath the earth.

[During the rest of this chant and song by the CHORUS, the QUEEN is pouring the drink-offerings at Darius' tomb, with appropriate ritual actions.]

Now, you holy divinities of the underworld,
 Earth and Hermes and you, King of the Shades,⁹⁵
 send that soul up from below into the light;
 for if he knows any further remedy for our troubles,
 he, alone of mortals, will tell us how to end them.⁹⁶

Does he hearken to me—the blessed King, equal to a
 god—
 as I send forth clearly in Eastern speech
 my variegated, grief-laden,
 cries that tell of woe?
 Let me try to reach him, voicing loudly
 our wretched sufferings:
 does he hear me from below?

I pray you, Earth and you other rulers of the
 underworld,

95 Hades/Aidoneus/Pluto (who will be addressed by name at 650).

96 A slightly illogical statement, resulting from an attempt to say two things at once: (1) Darius, unlike any living mortal, may have the knowledge that will enable him to tell the Persians the right course to follow; (2) if he does have such knowledge, Darius will surely be willing to impart it.

AESCHYLUS

- δαίμονα μεγαυχῇ
 ἰόντ' αἰνέσαιτ' ἐκ δόμων,
 Περσῶν Σουσιγενῇ θεόν,
 πέμπετε δ' ἄνω,
 645 οἷον οὐπω
 Περσὶς αἰ' ἐκάλυπεν.
- στρ. β ἦ φίλος ἀνὴρ, φίλος ὄχθος·
 φίλα γὰρ κέκευθεν ἦθη.
- 650 Αἰδωνεύς δ' ἀναπομπὸς ἀνείη, Αἰδωνεύς,
 θεῖον ἀνάκτορα Δαριᾶνα· ἦέ.
- ἀντ. β οὔτε γὰρ ἄνδρας ποτ' ἀπώλλυ
 πολεμοφθόροισιν ἄταις,
- 655 θεομήστωρ δ' ἐκυκλήσκετο Πέρσαις, θεομήστωρ
 δ' ἔσκεν, ἐπεὶ στρατὸν ἴεῦ ἐποδώκει· ἦέ.

642 μεγαυχῇ k: μεγαλαυχῇ vel sim. M I b k.

647 φίλος ὄχθος b: ἦ φίλος ὄχθος M I b k.

650 ἀνείη (sic) M: ἄν εἴη Ms k γρ Σ I: ἀνίη I b Σ Φ: ἀνία k: ἀνίησ' b: ἀνίησ' b k.

651 (at start of line) Δαρσιὸν codd.: del. Dindorf.

651 θεῖον Schütz: οἷον codd.: οἷον iSM.

651 ἀνάκτορα Δαριᾶνα Dindorf: ἀνακτα Δαρσιᾶν vel sim. codd.

656 εἴ (om. Macb') ἐποδώκει (ὑπεδώκει Mac, ἐπεδώκει b' k' (?) codd.

Σ(i)Φ: ὑπὸ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πόδα ἡνιόχει Σ M Σ(ii)Φ: εἴ ποδούχει Dindorf: ἡνιόδωκει West.

PERSIANS

- consent to this proud divine being
 emerging from your abode—
 the Persians' god, born in Susa—
 and send him up here,
 one like no other
 whom Persian soil has ever covered.
- Truly we love the man, we love the mound;
 for it conceals a man of lovable character.
 May Aidoneus release him and send him up, Aidoneus—
 the godlike ruler Darian!⁹⁷ Eh-hh-e!
- For he was never one to lose many men
 by disastrous slaughters in war;
 the Persians called him “divine counsellor”, and a divine
 Counselor
 he was, for he guided⁹⁸ the people well. Eh-hh-e!

[During the next two stanzas the CHORUS are on their knees, beating and furrowing the ground with their hands.]

97 Since this form of the king's name is no closer than the regular Greek form Δαρσιός to the Persian Dārayavahuš, it may be based on the form used in some third language (of Asia Minor?); at any rate Aeschylus, in using it here and below (663, 671), is clearly seeking to give the invocation a particularly exotic air.

98 The verb is corrupt beyond confident restoration (and the scholiast's paraphrase, “drove [as a charioteer] under his own foot”, may be only an attempt to wring sense out of the transmitted word), but this must be approximately its meaning.

AESCHYLUS

- στρ. γ βαλλήν, ἀρχαῖος βαλλήν, ἴθι, ἱκοῦ·
 ἔλθ' ἐπ' ἄκρον κόρυμβον ὄχθου,
 660 κροκόβαπτον ποδὸς εὖμαρτιν αἰείρων,
 βασιλείου τήρας φάλαρον πιφαύσκων.
 664 βάσκε, πάτερ ἄκακε Δαριάν· οἷ
- ἀντ. γ ὅπως αἰνά τε κλύης νέα τ' ἄχῃ
 δέσποτα, δέσποτ', ὦ φάνηθι.
 Στυγία γάρ τις ἐπ' ἀγλὺς πεπόταται
 670 νεολαία γὰρ ἤδη κατὰ πᾶσ' ὄλωλεν.
 βάσκε, πάτερ ἄκακε Δαριάν· οἷ

- ἐποδ. αἰαῖ αἰαῖ
 ὦ πολύκλαυτε φίλοισι θανόν,
 675 τί τάδε, τί τάδε, δυνάτα, δυνάτα,
 †περὶ τᾷ σᾷ† διδυμα διαγόνειν' ἀμάρτια;
 πᾶσαι γὰρ γᾷ τᾷδ' ἐξέφθινται τρίσκαλμοι
 680 νᾶες ἄναες ἄναες.

665 αἰνά Vīketos (γ' αἰνά Pauw): καινά codd.

667 δέσποτ' ὦ Enger: δεσπότου codd.

675 τί τάδε τί τάδε West: τί τάδε codd.

676 περὶ τᾷ σᾷ vel sim. codd. (περὶ τ'ῖσ'ῖ Mac): περισσά Bothe: περὶσσε West.

677 διαγόνειν' G.C.W. Schneider: διαγόνειν' Ms: διαγόνειν M: διὰ γόνειν' γρ I: διάγοις(ν) δ' (δ' om. b' k') I b k.

678 γὰρ γᾷ Dindorf: γᾷ vel sim. codd.

PERSIANS

- Ballên, our ancient ballên,⁹⁹ come, come to us!
 Come to the very summit of your tomb-mound,
 lifting up your feet in their saffron-dyed slippers,
 revealing the peak of your royal hat.¹⁰⁰
 come hither, father Darian who never harmed us—oi!—
 so that you may hear of terrible recent sorrows.
 Master, master, show yourself!
 A cloud of Stygian gloom hovers over us,
 for now all of our young men have perished!
 Come hither, father Darian who never harmed us—oi!

[The CHORUS rise to their feet.]

Aiai, aiai!

- You whose death was so much bewailed by those who
 loved you,
 our lord, our lord, what does it mean, what does it mean,
 this ever-to-be-lamented twin failure¹⁰¹ that has befallen us?
 All the triple-oared ships¹⁰² this land possessed have
 vanished away—
 they are ships no more, ships no more!

[The GHOST OF DARIUS appears above his tomb.]

99 This appears to be a Phrygian word for “king” ([Plutarch], On Rivers 12.3–4); in Sophocles’ *Shepherds*, whose scene was Troy, the chorus use it in addressing (presumably) Priam (Sophocles fr. 515).

100 The Persian noble’s headgear (τιάρα or κυρβασία) was a soft felt hat; the King wore a taller, stiffened, peaked version.

101 The loss of the fleet and of the land army; cf. 719–720, 728.

102 lit. “ships with three <sets of thole-pins>”, i.e. triremes.

AESCHYLUS

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

- ὥ πιστὰ πιστῶν ἥλικές θ' ἤβης ἐμῆς,
 Πέρσαι γεραιοί, τίνα πόλις πονεῖ πόνον;
 στένει, κέκοπται, καὶ χαράσσεται πέδον.
 λεύσσω δ' ἄκοιτιν τὴν ἐμὴν τάφου πέλας
 685 ταρβῶ· χοὰς δὲ πρηνεμένης ἐδεξάμην·
 ὑμεῖς δὲ θρηνεῖτ' ἐγγὺς ἐστῶτες τάφου,
 καὶ ψυχαγωγοῖς ὀρθιάζοντες γόοις
 οἰκτρῶς καλεῖσθέ μ'· ἔστι δ' οὐκ εὐέξοδον,
 ἄλλως τε πάντως χοὶ κατὰ χθονὸς θεοὶ
 690 λαβεῖν ἀμείνους εἰσὶν ἢ μεθίεναι·
 ὅμως δ' ἐκείνοις ἐνδυναστεύσας ἐγὼ
 ἤκω. τάχυνε δ', ὥς ἄμεμπτος ὦ χρόνου·
 τί ἐστι Πέρσαις νεοχμὸν ἐμβριθὲς κακόν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- σπ. σέβομαι μὲν προσιδέσθαι,
 695 σέβομαι δ' ἀντία λέξαι
 σέθεν ἀρχαίῳ περὶ τάρβει.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ κάτωθεν ἦλθον σοῖς γόοις πεπεισμένος,
 μή τι μακιστῆρα μῦθον, ἀλλὰ σύντομον λόγον
 εἰπὲ καὶ πέραντε πάντα, τὴν ἐμὴν αἰδῶ μεθεῖς.

687 ὀρθιάζοντες x.z: ὀρθρίζοντες κ: ὀρθιάζοντες M I b k.

PERSIANS

ghost of darius

Trusted of the trusted, contemporaries of my youth, elders of Persia,
 what distress is our state suffering? The earth is groaning, having
 been beaten and furrowed; the sight of my wife close by my tomb
 causes me fear,¹⁰³ though I have gladly accepted her drink-offerings;
 and you are standing round my tomb singing songs of grief, lifting up
 your voices in wailing to summon my spirit, and calling on me in
 piteous tones. It has not been easy to gain egress; apart from anything
 else, the gods below the earth are better at taking people in than at
 letting them go; nevertheless, holding as I do a position of power
 among them, I have come here. But be speedy, so that I am not
 blamed for the time I have taken: what is the heavy recent disaster
 that has happened to Persia?

[The CHORUS prostrate themselves.]

chorus

I am too awed to look upon you,
 I am too awed to speak before you,
 because I feared you of old.

ghost of darius

But since it is your laments that have induced me to come up from
 below, speak now, not in long-winded words but putting it concisely
 and covering everything, setting your awe of me aside.

103 Presumably we are meant to understand that the presence at the tomb of
 the Queen and the Elders suggests to Darius that whatever disaster has happened
 involves both the state as a whole and one or more of his own children.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ. δίομαι μὲν χαρίσασθαι,
701 δίομαι δ' ἀντία φάσθαι,
λέξας δύσλεκτα φίλοισιν.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ δέος παλαιὸν σοὶ φρενῶν ἀνθίσταται,
τῶν ἐμῶν λέκτρων γεραιὰ ζύννομ', εὐγενὲς δάμαρ,
705 κλαυμάτων λήξασα τῶνδε καὶ γόων σαφές τί μοι
λέξον. ἀνθρώπεια δ' ἂν τοι πῆματ' ἂν τύχοι
βροτοῖς·
πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ θαλάσσης, πολλὰ δ' ἐκ χέρσου
κακὰ
γίνεται θνητοῖς, ὁ μᾶσσων βίωτος ἦν ταθῇ πρόσω.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ὦ βροτῶν πάντων ὑπερσχὼν ὄλβον εὐτυχεῖ πότμῳ,
710 ὥς ἔως τ' ἔλευσσεσ ἀγὰς ἡλίου ζηλωτὸς ὢν
βίωτον εὐαίωνα Πέρσαις ὥς θεὸς δαίγαγες,
νῦν τέ σε ζηλῶ θανόντα πρὶν κακῶν ἰδεῖν βάθος.
πάντα γάρ, Δαρεῖ', ἀκούσῃ μῦθον ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ·
διαπεπόρθηται τὰ Περσῶν πράγμαθ', ὥς εἰπεῖν
ἔπος.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

715 τί νι τρόπῳ; λοιμοῦ τις ἦλθε σκηπτὸς, ἢ στάσις
πόλει;

700-701 δίομαι k(and b' in 700): δείομαι M I b k.

704 δάμαρ I: γύναι M b k.

709 πότμῳ I ac b k: πότμον M I pc b k.

714 εἰπεῖν ἔπος k: ἔπος εἰπεῖν M I b.

chorus [rising again to their feet]

I am afraid to gratify your wish,
I am afraid to speak plainly,
saying things that are hard to say to a friend.

ghost of darius

Well, since your old fear is standing guard over your mind—[turning to the queen, who seems wrapped up in her grief] I ask you, my noble wife, old companion of my bed, to end this crying and wailing and speak plainly to me. Human beings, you know, are bound to experience human sufferings; there are many evils that befall mortals, both by sea and by land,¹⁰⁴ if their life is prolonged to a great span.

queen

You whose fortunate fate surpassed all mortals in bliss, how enviable you were when you saw the light of the sun and led a life of such happiness that Persians looked on you as a god! And now too I envy you, because you died before seeing the depths of our present suffering. It will take you very little time, Darius, to hear the whole story: to all intents and purposes, the fortunes of Persia are utterly ruined.

ghost of darius

How has it happened? Has our state been stricken by a virulent plague,¹⁰⁵ or by civil strife?

104 Probably a reminiscence of Hesiod, Works and Days 101 ("The earth is full of evils, and so is the sea").

105 lit. "a thunderbolt of plague".

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλ' ἀμφ' Ἀθήνας πᾶς κατέφθαρται
στρατός.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

τίς δ' ἐμῶν ἐκεῖσε παίδων ἐστρατηλάτει; φράσον.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

θούριος Ξέρξης, κενώσας πᾶσαν ἡπείρου πλάκα.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

πεζὸς ἢ ναύτης δὲ πείραν τήνδ' ἐμώρανεν τάλας;

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

720 ἀμφοτέρα· διπλοῦν μέτωπον ἦν δυοῖν
στρατευμάτων.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

πῶς δὲ καὶ στρατὸς τοσόσδε πεζὸς ἦνυσεν περᾶν;

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

μηχαναῖς ἔζευξεν Ἑλλης πορθμόν, ὥστ' ἔχειν
πόρον.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

καὶ τόδ' ἐξέπραξεν, ὥστε Βόσπορον κληῖσαι μέγαν;

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ὦδ' ἔχει γνώμης δὲ ποῦ τις δαιμόνων ξυνήψατο.

720 στρατευμάτων k: στρατηλάτων (-αν b) MI b.

PERSIANS

queen

Not at all; what has happened is that our entire army has been
destroyed in the region of Athens.

ghost of darius

And tell me, which of my sons led the army there?

queen

The bold Xerxes; he emptied the whole expanse of the continent.

ghost of darius

And did the wretched boy make this foolish attempt by land or by
sea?

queen

Both; it was a double front composed of two forces.

ghost of darius

And how did a land army of that size manage to get across the water?

queen

He contrived means to yoke the strait of Helle, so as to create a
pathway.

ghost of darius

He actually carried that out, so as to close up the mighty
Bosporus?¹⁰⁶

queen

It is true. Some divinity must have touched his wits.

106 In poetry, the Hellespont is sometimes referred to as the Bosporus (746; Sophocles, Ajax 884; Sophocles fr. 503). a name which properly, then as now, belonged to the other strait separating Europe from Asia, at Byzantium/Calchedon, some 150 miles (240 km) to the north-east.

ÆSCHYLUS

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

725 φεῦ, μέγας τις ἦλθε δαίμων, ὥστε μὴ φρονεῖν
καλῶς.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ὥς ἰδεῖν τέλος πάρεστιν οἶον ἦνυσεν κακόν.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

καὶ τί δὴ πράξασιν αὐτοῖς ὃδ' ἐπιστενάζετε;

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ναυτικὸς στρατὸς κακωθεὶς πεζὸν ὤλεσε στρατόν.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ὃδε παμπήδην δὲ λαὸς πᾶς κατέφθαρται δορί;

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

730 πρὸς τὰδ' ὥς Σούσων μὲν ἄστυ πᾶν κερανδρία
στένει—

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ὦ πόποι κεδνῆς ἀρωγῆς κάπικουρίας στρατοῦ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

Βακτρίων δ' ἔρρει πανώλης δῆμος, οὐδέ τις
†γέρων†.

732 γέρων codd.: περί Gomperz: perh. περῆ (cf. 799: περῶν Wecklein).

PERSIANS

ghost of darius

Ah, it was a powerful divinity that came upon him, to put him out of
his right mind!

queen

Yes, one can see by the outcome what a disaster he managed to
create.

ghost of darius

And what in fact was the outcome for them over which you are
grieving so?

queen

The naval force was savaged, and that doomed the land army to
destruction.

ghost of darius

Was the whole host so utterly and completely destroyed by the
spear?¹⁰⁷

queen

So that on account of this, the whole city of Susa is grieving because
it is empty of men—

ghost of darius

Ah me, our army, our valiant aid and protector!

queen

And the whole community of the Bactrians is perished and gone,
with not one survivor.¹⁰⁸

107 Apparently Darius mistakenly supposes that the land army was
destroyed in battle.

108 This must have been the approximate sense; the transmitted reading,
which means “nor <is there a single old man”, is absurd, since it was the young
who perished in the war.

AESCHYLUS

EIDOLON DAREIOY

ὦ μέλεος, οἶαν ἄρ' ἤβην ζυμμάχων ἀπώλεσεν.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

μονάδα δὲ Ξερξὴν ἔρημόν φασι νῦν πολλῶν μετὰ—

EIDOLON DAREIOY

735 πῶς τε δὴ καὶ ποῖ τελευτᾶν; ἔστι τις σωτηρία;

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ἄσμενον μολεῖν γέφυραν γαῖν δυοῖν ζευκτηρίαν.

EIDOLON DAREIOY

καὶ πρὸς ἡπειρον σεσῶσθαι τήνδε; τοῦτ' ἐτήτυμον;

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ναί, λόγος κρατεῖ σαφηνῆς τοῦτό γ'· οὐκ ἔνι
στάσις.

EIDOLON DAREIOY

φεῦ, τάχειά γ' ἦλθε χρησμῶν πρᾶξις, εἰς δὲ παῖδ'
ἐμὸν

740 Ζεὺς ἀπέσκηπεν τελευτὴν θεσφάτων· ἐγὼ δέ που
διὰ μακροῦ χρόνου τάδ' ἠύχουν ἐκτελεστήσειν
θεοῦς·

ἀλλ', ὅταν σπεύδῃ τις αὐτός, ὧς θεὸς συνάπτεται.
νῦν κακῶν ἔουκε πηγὴ πᾶσιν ἠὺρῆσθαι φίλοις·
παῖς δ' ἐμὸς τάδ' οὐ κατειδὼς ἤνυσεν νέω θράσει,

745 ὅστις Ἑλλήσποντον ἱρὸν δοῦλον ὧς δεσμώμασιν
ἦλπισε σχῆσθαι ῥέοντα, Βόσπορον ῥέον θεοῦ,

736 γαῖν Askew, cf. ΣΜ δὲ ζεύγνυσιν Ἀσίαν καὶ Εὐρώπην: ἐν codd.

PERSIANS

ghost of darius

Poor fellow, what young manhood of our allies he has lost!

queen

And Xerxes himself, they say, alone and forlorn, with only a few
men—

ghost of darius

How did he finish up, and where? Is there any chance of his being
safe?

queen

—has arrived, to his relief, at the bridge that joins the two lands
together.

ghost of darius

And has come safe back to our continent? Is that really true?

queen

Yes, that is the prevalent and definite report; there is no dispute about
it.

ghost of darius

Ah, how swiftly the oracles have come true! Zeus has launched the
fulfilment of the prophecies against my son. I used to think
confidently, “I suppose the gods will fulfil them in some distant
future”; but when a man is in a hurry himself, the god will lend him a
hand. Now, it seems, there has been discovered a fountain of sorrow
for all who are dear to me—and it is my son, by his youthful
rashness, who has achieved this without knowing what he was doing.
He thought he could stop the flow of the Hellespont, the divine
stream¹⁰⁹ of the Bosphorus, by putting chains on it, as if

109 lit. “stream of a god”, the god being Poseidon (750).

καὶ πόρον μετερρύθμιζε, καὶ πέδαις σφυρηλάτοις
 περιβαλὼν πολλὴν κέλευθον ἤνυσεν πολλῶ στρατῶ·
 θνητὸς ὢν δὲ θεῶν τε πάντων ᾤετ', οὐκ εὐβουλία,
 750 καὶ Ποσειδῶνος κρατήσεν. πῶς τὰδ' οὐ νόσος
 φρενῶν
 εἶχε παῖδ' ἐμόν; δέδοικα μὴ πολὺς πλούτου πόνος
 οὐμὸς ἀντραπεῖς γένηται τοῦ φθάσαντος ἀρπαγῇ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ταῦτά τοι κακοῖς ὁμιλῶν ἀνδράσιν διδάσκεται
 θούριος Ξέρξης· λέγουσι δ' ὥς σὺ μὲν μέγαν
 τέκνοις
 755 πλοῦτον ἐκτήσω σὺν αἰγμῇ, τὸν δ' ἀνανδρίας ὑπο
 ἔνδον αἰχμάζειν, πατρῶον δ' ὄλβον οὐδὲν αὐξάνειν·
 τοιάδ' ἐξ ἀνδρῶν ὄνειδη πολλάκις κλύων κακῶν
 τήνδ' ἐβούλευσεν κέλευθον καὶ στρατεύμ' ἐφ'
 Ἑλλάδα.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

τοιγάρ σφιν ἔργον ἐστὶν ἐξεργασμένον
 760 μέγιστον, αἰεὶμνηστον, οἷον οὐδέπω
 τόδ' ἄστυ Σούσων ἐξεκείνωσ' ἐμπεσόν,
 ἐξ οὔτε τιμὴν Ζεὺς ἄναξ τήνδ' ὥπασεν,
 ἐν' ἀνδρ' ἀπάσης Ἀσίδος μηλοτρόφου
 ταγεῖν ἔχοντα σκῆπτρον εὐθυντήριον.

749 δὲ θεῶν τε Doederlein: θεῶν τε k: θεῶν δὲ MI b k.
 752 ἀντραπεῖς Zakas, cf. 163: ἀνθρώποις codd.
 753 τοι Dindorf: τοῖς codd.
 761 ἐξεκείνωσ' ἐμπεσόν Pauw: ἐξεκείνωσεν πεσόν codd.

it were a slave; he altered the nature of its passage,¹¹⁰ put hammered
 fetters upon it, and created a great pathway for a great army. He
 thought, ill-counselled as he was, that he, a mortal, could lord it over
 all the gods and over Poseidon. Surely this was a mental disease that
 had my son in its grip! I am afraid that the great wealth I gained by
 my labours may be overturned and become the booty of the first
 comer.

queen

The rash Xerxes, I should tell you, was taught this way of thinking by
 associating with wicked men. They said that whereas you had
 acquired great wealth for your children by warfare, he, from
 unmanliness, was being a stay-at-home warrior and doing nothing to
 increase the riches he had inherited. It was because he had heard
 taunts like that, over and over again, from these wicked men, that he
 planned this military expedition against Greece.

ghost of darius

And so he has completed an immense, never-to-be-forgotten
 achievement; nothing else that has befallen this city of Susa has ever
 emptied it like this, since Lord Zeus first granted us this honour, that
 one man should be supreme over the whole of sheep-rearing Asia,
 wielding the scepter

110 i.e. he stopped up a sea-passage and created a land-passage instead.

AESCHYLUS

- 765 Μῆδος γὰρ ἦν ὁ πρῶτος ἡγεμὼν στρατοῦ,
 766 ἄλλος δ' ἐκείνου παῖς τόδ' ἔργον ἥνυσεν·
 768 τρίτος δ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ Κῦρος, εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ,
 769 ἄρξας ἔθηκε πᾶσιν εἰρήνην φύλοις·
 767 φρένες γὰρ αὐτοῦ θυμὸν ψακοστροφούν·
 770 Λυδῶν δὲ λαὸν καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐκτήσατο
 Ἰωνίαν τε πᾶσαν ἤλασεν βία·
 θεὸς γὰρ οὐκ ἤχθηρεν, ὥς εὖφρων ἔφω.
 Κύρου δὲ παῖς τέταρτος ἡῦθνε στρατόν·
 πέμπτος δὲ Μάρδος ἦρξεν, αἰσχύνῃ πάτρα·
 775 θρόνοισί τ' ἀρχαίοισι τὸν δὲ σὺν δόλῳ
 Ἀρταφρένης ἔκτεττεν ἐσθλὸς ἐν δόμοις
 777 ξὺν ἀνδράσιν φύλοισιν, οἷς τόδ' ἦν χρέος,
 779 κἀγὼ πάλου δ' ἔκυρσα τοῦπερ ἤθελον.

767 transposed by Page to follow 769.

773 ἡῦθνε Brunck: ἡθνε Mac k: ἰθνε Mpc I b k.

{778} ἔκτος δὲ Μάραφς (M Ipc b: Μαράφης, Μάρφς, Μάραφης Iac b k),
 ἔβδομος (δ' add. k', ε' add. b') Ἀρταφρένης codd.: del. Schütz.

PERSIANS

of directive authority. Medus¹¹¹ was the first leader of our host, and his son also achieved this position. The third ruler in the succession from him was Cyrus, a man blessed by the gods, who gave peace to all those he cared for, since his intelligence was in control of¹¹² his fighting spirit; he gained mastery over the peoples of Lydia and Phrygia, and overran all of Ionia by force. God did not hate him, because he was wise. The son of Cyrus¹¹³ was the fourth to direct the host. The fifth ruler was Mardus,¹¹⁴ a disgrace to his country and to his ancient throne. He was killed in his palace, by means of a crafty plot, by the admirable Artaphrenes¹¹⁵ together with some friends who took on this duty and with myself; and I gained by chance the lot I

111 Probably to be taken as the (mythical) eponymous founder of the kingdom of the Medes (cf. on 236). Later tragedians spoke of a Medus, son of Medea and Aegeus, as the ancestor of the Median people (Diodorus Siculus 4.55.5–56.1; [Apollodorus], Library 1.9.28). Alternatively Μῆδος may mean “a Mede”, in which case the reference will be to Cyaxares (reigned ca.625–585), the first Median king to extend his rule into Asia Minor; in that case his son will be Astyages, the maternal grandfather of Cyrus, eventually deposed by him.

112 lit. “turned the helm of”.

113 This was Cambyses (reigned 529–522), the conqueror of Egypt.

114 In Herodotus (3.61–79) he is called Smerdis and said to be a usurper impersonating Cambyses’ brother of the same name (in Persian Bardiya); so too Darius himself in the Behistun inscription (§§11–15; translated in M. Brosius, *The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I* [London, 2000] 23–24, 27–40) except that he calls the usurper Gaumata.

115 Herodotus (3.70ff) calls this man Intaphrenes, which is considerably closer to the Persian Vindafarnā; evidently Aeschylus has confused him with a man much better known to Greeks, Darius’ brother, the governor of Sardis at the time of the Ionian revolt (Herodotus 5.25.1 etc.), whose son of the same name had been joint commander of the Persian forces at Marathon.

AESCHYLUS

- 780 κάπεστράτευσα πολλά σὺν πολλῷ στρατῷ,
 ἀλλ' οὐ κακὸν τοσόνδε προσέβαλον πόλει·
 Ξέρξης δ' ἐμὸς παῖς νέος ἔτ' ὢν νέα φρονεῖ,
 κού μνημονεύει τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολάς.
 εὖ γὰρ σαφῶς τόδ' ἴστ', ἐμοὶ ξυνήλικες·
 785 ἅπαντες ἡμεῖς, οἱ κράτη τάδ' ἔσχομεν,
 οὐκ ἂν φανεῖμεν πῆματ' ἔρξαντες τόσα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί οὖν, ἄναξ Δαρεῖε; ποῖ καταστρέφεις
 λόγων τελευτήν; πῶς ἂν ἐκ τούτων ἔτι
 πράσσοιμεν ὥς ἄριστα Περσικὸς λεώς;

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

- 790 εἰ μὴ στρατεύοισθ' εἰς τὸν Ἑλλήνων τόπον,
 μηδ' εἰ στράτευμα πλεῖον ἢ τὸ Μηδικόν·
 αὐτὴ γὰρ ἡ γῆ ξύμμαχος κείνοις πέλει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς τοῦτ' ἔλεξας; τίνι τρόπῳ δὲ συμμαχεῖ;

782 ἔτ' ὢν Martin: ἐὼν M I: ὢν b k.

PERSIANS

desired.¹¹⁶ And I invaded many lands with great armies, but I never inflicted on my state such harm as this. My son Xerxes, though, is still a young man, thinking young man's thoughts, and he has not kept my instructions in mind. I tell you this plainly, my old contemporaries: take all of us together who have held this kingship, and we will not be found to have caused this much suffering.

chorus

What then, lord Darius? To what conclusion do your words lead? After this, how can we, the Persian people, get the best possible outcome for the future?

ghost of darius

By not invading the land of the Greeks, not even with a Median army still greater than before! Their country itself fights as their ally.

chorus

How do you mean? In what way does it fight as their ally?

116 i.e. we (either all the conspirators—so in effect Herodotus 3.84–88—or Darius and Artaphrenes alone) drew lots for the kingship, and I won. If the additional line (778) present in the mss. is retained in the text, the meaning will be: “He was killed . . . by the admirable Artaphrenes, together with some friends who took on this duty; the sixth <to rule> was Maraphis, the seventh Artaphrenes and myself; and I gained by chance the lot I desired.” The genuineness of the line is defended by M. L. West in M. A. Flower and M. Toher ed. *Georgica: Studies in Honour of George Cawkwell* (London, 1991) 184–8; but the text in this form gives no indication of who Maraphis was, leaves the nature of the connection between Artaphrenes and Darius completely undefined, makes Darius claim no credit at all for the assassination of the “disgrace” Mardus, and fails to explain why Artaphrenes, having masterminded Mardus' death, did not succeed immediately himself. See W. Kraus, *Wiener Studien* 104 (1991) 90–91. The interpolated line may derive ultimately from a marginal variant (Μάραφης for Μάρδοος) on 774, itself based on an apparent statement by the historian Hellanicus (FGrH 4 F 180, cited in a scholium on 770) that Cambyse's brothers were named Maraphis and Merphis; if the variant was written at the bottom of a column, below line 777, it could have been mistaken for a remnant of a lost line, and a “restoration” of that line cobbled together.

AESCHYLUS

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

κτείνουσα λιμῶ τοὺς ὑπερπόλλους ἄγαν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

795 ἀλλ' εὐσταλῇ τοι λεκτὸν ἀροῦμεν στόλον.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὁ μείνας νῦν ἐν Ἑλλάδος τόποις
στρατὸς κυρήσει νοστήμου σωτηρίας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ πᾶν στράτευμα βαρβάρων
περᾶ τὸν Ἑλλης πορθμὸν Εὐρώπης ἄπο;

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

800 παῦροί γε πολλῶν, εἴ τι πιστεῦσαι θεῶν
χρῆ θεσφάτοισιν, εἰς τὰ νῦν πεπραγμένα
βλέψαντα· συμβαίνει γὰρ οὐ τὰ μὲν, τὰ δ' οὔ.
κεῖπερ τάδ' ἐστί, πλῆθος ἐκκριτὸν στρατοῦ
λείπει κεναῖσιν ἐλπίσιν πεπεισμένος·
805 μίμνουσι δ' ἔνθα πεδίον Ἀσωπὸς ῥοαῖς
ἄρδει, φύλον πίασμα Βοιωτῶν χθονί·
οὔ σφιν κακῶν ὕψιστ' ἐπαμμένει παθεῖν,
ὑβρεως ἄποινα κάθεον φρονημάτων·

806 φύλον I b k: φύλος M γρ I b k ΣΦ.

PERSIANS

ghost of darius

By starving to death a multitude that is too vastly numerous.

chorus

Well, we'll raise a picked, well-equipped expedition.

ghost of darius

No, not even the army that has now been left in the land of Greece
will gain a safe return home.

chorus

What do you mean? Hasn't the whole of the Eastern army crossed
back from Europe over the strait of Helle?

ghost of darius

Few out of many, if one is to place any credence in the oracles of the
gods, looking at what has now happened—for oracles are not fulfilled
by halves.¹¹⁷ If that is indeed so, Xerxes, seduced by vain hopes, has
left behind a large, select portion of his army. They remain where the
Asopus¹¹⁸ waters the plain with its stream, bringing welcome
enrichment to the soil of the Boeotians.¹¹⁹ There the destiny awaits
them of suffering a crowning catastrophe, in requital for their
outrageous actions and their godless arrogance.

117 lit. "for it is not the case that some things come to pass and others do not". Darius' point is that the same oracle which had foretold the naval defeat at Salamis also foretold a crushing defeat on land, soon after, at Plataea. The first part of this oracle had now been fulfilled; therefore the second part would be, too.

118 The principal river of Boeotia, which separates Thebes from Plataea and Mt Cithaeron to the south.

119 Aeschylus has simplified the course of events. Mardonius' army actually wintered in Thessaly (Herodotus 8.113–135), and in the spring he advanced on Athens, which was captured and later burnt for the second time (Herodotus 9.1–3, 9.13.2); only when it was clear that Athens would not come to terms, and that the Spartans were on the march, did he retreat into Boeotia and prepare to meet the enemy there (Herodotus 9.12–15).

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

- οἱ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη
 810 ἡδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεῶς·
 βωμοὶ δ' αἰστοὶ δαιμόνων θ' ἰδρύματα
 πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανίσταται βάθρων.
 τοιγὰρ κακῶς δράσαντες οὐκ ἐλάσσονα
 πάσχουσι, τὰ δὲ μέλλουσι, κούδέπω κακῶν
 815 κρηνὶς ὑπέστη, κάλλ' ἔτ' ἐκπιδύεται.
 τόσος γὰρ ἔσται πελανὸς αἵματος φαγῆς
 πρὸς γῇ Πλαταιῶν Δωρίδος λόγχης ὑπο-
 θίνες νεκρῶν δὲ καὶ τριτοσπόρῳ γονῇ
 ἄφωνα σηματοῦσιν ὄμμασιν βροτῶν
 820 ὥς οὐχ ὑπέρφευ θνητὸν ὄντα χρὴ φρονεῖν·
 ὕβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦς' ἐκάρπωσε στάχυν
 ἄτης, ὅθεν πάγκλαυτον ἐξαμὰ θέρος.
 τοιαῦθ' ὁρῶντες τῶνδε τάπιτίμια
 μέμνησθ' Ἀθηναίων Ἑλλάδος τε, μηδέ τις
 825 ὑπερφρονήσας τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα
 ἄλλων ἐρασθεὶς ὄλβον ἐκχέη μέγαν.
 Ζεὺς τοι κολαστὴς τῶν ὑπερκόμπων ἄγαν
 φρονημάτων ἔπεστιν, εὐθυνὸς βαρὺς.
 πρὸς ταῦτ' ἐκεῖνον σωφρονεῖν κεχρημένοι
 830 πινύσκειτ' εὐλόγοισι νοουθετήμασιν
 λῆξαι θεοβλαβοῦνθ' ὑπερκόμπῳ θράσει.
 σὺ δ', ὦ γεραιὰ μήτηρ ἡ Ξέρξου φύλη,

811 θ' I k: om. M b k. | 815 κρηνὶς Housman, ὑπέστη ΣΦ, κάλλ' Lawson:
 κρηνὶς ὑπέστην ἄλλ' codd.

815 ἐκπιδύεται Schütz: ἐκπαιδεύεται (sic-b') vel sim. codd.

When they came to the land of Greece, they did not scruple to plunder the images of the gods¹²⁰ and set fire to temples: altars have vanished, and the abodes of deities have been ruined, uprooted, wrenched from their foundations. Because of this evil they have done, they are suffering evil to match it in full measure, and have still to suffer more: the fountain of suffering has not stopped flowing—more of it is still gushing forth, so great will be the clotted libation of slain men's blood on the soil of the Plataeans, shed by the Dorian spear.¹²¹ The heaps of corpses will voicelessly proclaim to the eyes of men, even to the third generation, that one who is a mortal should not think arrogant thoughts: outrage has blossomed, and has produced a crop of ruin, from which it is reaping a harvest of universal sorrow. Look on the price that is being paid for these actions, and remember Athens¹²² and Greece: let no one despise the fortune he possesses and, through lust for more, let his great prosperity go to waste. Zeus, I tell you, stands over all as a chastiser of pride that boasts itself to excess, calling it to stern account. With this in mind, please advise him to show good sense; warn him, with well-spoken admonitions, to stop offending the gods with his boastful rashness. And you, dear, aged mother of Xerxes, go to your

120 The verb συλᾶν is broad enough in meaning to cover both carrying off the statues themselves (if they were of bronze or otherwise valuable) and stripping them of precious (and sacred) ornaments.

121 It is worth noting that the entire credit for the victory of Plataea is here given to the Spartans.

122 Cf. on 285.

ἐλθοῦς' ἐς οἶκους κόσμον, ὅστις εὐπρεπής,
λαβοῦς' ὑπαντίαζε παιδί' πάντα γὰρ
835 κακῶν ὑπ' ἄλγους λακίδες ἀμφὶ σώματι
στημορραγοῦσι ποικίλων ἐσθημάτων.
ἀλλ' αὐτὸν εὐφρόνως σὺ πρᾶνον λόγοις
μόνης γάρ, οἶδα, σοῦ κλύων ἀνέξεται.
ἐγὼ δ' ἄπειμι γῆς ὑπὸ ζόφον κάτω.
840 ὑμεῖς δέ, πρέσβεις, χαίρει', ἐν κακοῖς ὁμῶς
ψυχῇ διδόντες ἡδονὴν καθ' ἡμέραν
ὡς τοῖς θανοῦσι πλοῦτος οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦ πολλὰ καὶ παρόντα καὶ μέλλοντ' ἔτι
ἡλγησ' ἀκούσας βαρβάροισι πῆματα.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

845 ὦ δαῖμον, ὥς με πόλλ' ἐσέρχεται κακὰ
ἄλγη· μάλιστα δ' ἦδε συμφορὰ δάκνει,
ἀτιμίαν γε παιδὸς ἀμφὶ σώματι
ἐσθημάτων κλυοῦσαν, ἣ νιν ἀμπέχει.
ἀλλ' εἴμι, καὶ λαβοῦσα κόσμον ἐκ δόμων
850 ὑπαντιάζειν ἑμῷ παιδί' πειράσομαι·
οὐ γὰρ τὰ φύλτατ' ἐν κακοῖς προδώσομεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α ὦ πόποι, ἦ μεγάλας ἀγαθὰς τε πο-
λισσονόμου βιοτᾶς ἐπεκύρσαμεν, εὖθ' ὁ γεραιὸς

8150 ἐμῷ παιδί MI b: παιδί ἐμῷ vel sim. b k: παιδί μου Burges: ἐμῷ del.
West, suggesting e.g. παιδί <καὶ λόγοισί νιν | παρηγορῆσαι προσφυλῶς>
πειράσομαι.

palace, take such attire as is fitting, and go to meet your son. Because
of his grief at the disaster, all the threads of his richly decorated
garments are torn and in rags around his body. Calm him down with
kindly words; I know that you are the only person he will be able to
endure listening to. For myself, I am going away under the earth,
down into the darkness. Farewell to you, old friends, and even amid
these troubles, see you give your hearts pleasure day by day: wealth
is of no benefit to the dead.

[The GHOST disappears.]

chorus

How it pains me to hear of these many sufferings, present and still to
come, of the people of the East!

queen

O god, how many dire sorrows are coming upon me! But the
misfortune that stings me most of all is to hear of the dishonourable
state of the garments that clothe my son's body. I am going now, and
I will take proper attire from the palace and try to meet my son. We
will not fail those who are dearest to us when they are in trouble.

[Exit.]

chorus

O popoi! What a great and good life we enjoyed
in our well-run city, when our old

AESCHYLUS

- 855 πανταρκῆς ἀκάκας ἄμαχος βασιλεὺς
ἰσόθεος Δαρεῖος ἄρχε χώρας.
- ἀντ. α. πρῶτα μὲν εὐδοκίμους στρατιάς ἀπε-
860 φαίνόμεθ' ἡδὲ ἴνομίματα πύργινα πάντ' ἐπεύθυνον†
νόστοι δ' ἐκ πολέμων ἀπόνους ἀπαθεῖς
<ἄνδρας> ἐς εὖ πράσσοντας ἄγον οἴκους.
- σφ. β. ὅσας δ' εἴλε πόλεις πόρον οὐ διαβὰς Ἄλως
ποταμοῖο
- 867 οὐδ' ἀφ' ἐστίας συθείς,
870 οἶαι Στρυμονίου πελάγους Ἀχελωῖδες εἰσὶ πάροικοι
Θρηῶκων ἐπαύλεις

858 εὐδοκίμους x: εὐδοκίμου M I b k.

858-9 858-9 ἀπεφαίνόμε(σ)θα Isser b ΣΦ: ἀποφαίνόμε(σ)θα M I b k ΣΜ.

859 νομίματα M b: νόμιμα τὰ I b k: νόμιμα b k: νόμισματα b: νόμισμα τὰ k:
πολίσματα Keiper, cf. ΣΜΦ ταῖς πόλεσι ταῖς πορθουμέναις.

860 πύργινα πάντ' ἐπεύθυνον (ἐπεθ- Ms k'): ΣΜΦ (above) imply e.g.
πύργιν' ἐπέρθομεν (Pallis) <ἄρδην>.

863 <ἄνδρας> add. Havet.

863 ἐς before εὖ Newman: before οἴκους codd.

866 ποταμοῖο Burney: ποταμοῦ vel sim. codd.

PERSIANS

never-failing,¹²³ never-harming, invincible king,
godlike Darius, ruled the country!

In the first place, we produced armies of proved worth,
and high-towered cities <we put totally to sack>,¹²⁴
and, marching back from war, <our men> came¹²⁵
unscathed,
unfatigued, to flourishing homes.

And how many cities he took, without crossing the
stream of the river Halys¹²⁶
or stirring from his hearth!

Such were the freshwater¹²⁷ dwellings of the Thracians
that neighbour the Strymonian gulf,¹²⁸

123 lit. "all-sufficing", i.e. always satisfying the needs of any situation.

124 The transmitted text is unmetrical, and, to the extent that it can be tortured into sense, seems to refer to the excellence and stability of Persian laws, a subject with no relevance to the surrounding context which relates exclusively to Persian success in war. Moreover, the scholia clearly reflect a text that made some reference to the sacking of cities (for this theme cf. 65, 105-8, 178, 348). I suspect therefore that πάντ' ἐπεύθυνον is a fragment of a marginal note (probably part of a quotation from another play) which has driven the original ending of this line out of the text.

125 lit. "and returns from wars brought <our men . . ."

126 This river (now the Kizilirmak) divides northern Asia Minor into an eastern and a western half, and had formerly been the boundary between the Median and Lydian empires.

127 lit. "Acheloian": the name of the river Achelous (the largest in Greece, and sometimes spoken of as the father of all rivers—cf. Euripides, Bacchae 519), was used in poetry to mean "(fresh) water" (ibid. 625; Sophocles fr. 5; Aristophanes, Lysistrata 381).

128 The reference is to the lake-villages of the Strymon basin (cf. Herodotus 5.16), well known to Athenians in 472 because of Cimon's recent campaign on the lower Strymon, which included a large-scale clearance of the Thracians in the neighbourhood (Plutarch, Cimon 7.2).

AESCHYLUS

- ἀντ β λίμνας τ' ἔκτοθεν αἰ κατὰ χέρσον ἐληλαμέναι πέρι
 πύργον
 875 τοῦδ' ἄνακτος αἶον,
 Ἑλλας τ' ἀμφὶ πόρον πλατὺν ἐκχύμεναι, μυχία τε
 Προποντίς
 879 καὶ στόμαμα Πόντου·
 στρ γ νᾶσοί θ' αἰ κατὰ πρῶν' ἄλιον περὶ κύλυστοι
 τᾷδε γὰρ προσήμεναι,
 οἷα Λέσβος ἐλαιόφυτός τε Σάμος,
 885 Χίος ἠδὲ Πάρος, Νάξος, Μύκονος,
 Τήνω τε συνάπτουσ' Ἄνδρος ἀγχιγείτων·
 ἀν γ καὶ τὰς ἀγχιάλους ἐκράτυνε μεσάκτους,
 891 Λῆμνον Ἰκάρου θ' ἔδος,
 καὶ Ρόδον ἠδὲ Κνίδον, Κυπρίας τε πόλεις
 895 Πάφον ἠδὲ Σόλους Σαλαμῖνά τε, τὰς
 νῦν ματρόπολιν τῶνδ' αἰτία στεναγμῶν·

871 ἐπαύλεις Wilamowitz: ἐπαύλων or ἐπαύλεων codd.

876 τ' k: om. M I b.

877 ἐκχύμεναι Broadhead: σύχόμεναι M b k: αὐχόμεναι b k ΣΦ: αὐχόμεναι

I: ἐχόμεναι b: ἐρχόμεναι γρ I: οὐκ οὐχόμεναι i ΣΜ(?)

897 στεναγμῶν ΣΤρ: στεναγμάτων codd.

PERSIANS

- and, beyond the lake, the mainland cities, each
 surrounded by a high wall,
 obeyed this King,
 as did those spread around the broad strait of Helle, and
 the Propontis¹²⁹ with its deep bays,
 and the mouth of the Black Sea;
 and the sea-girt islands which lay near this land¹³⁰
 by the promontory that runs into the sea,¹³¹
 such as Lesbos, olive-growing Samos,
 and Chios; and Paros, Naxos, Myconos,
 and Andros, the near neighbour that adjoins Tenos;
 and he also ruled the sea-lands midway between the two
 shores,¹³²
 Lemnos and the habitations of Icaros,
 and Rhodes and Cnidus, and the cities of Cyprus,
 Paphos and Soli and Salamis—
 whose mother-city is the cause of our present
 lamentation;¹³³

129 Now the Sea of Marmara; the most important Greek cities on its shores were Cyzicus on the Asian side and Perinthus on the European.

130 "This land" here means Asia as a whole.

131 The Ionian peninsula, which has Chios to its west, Lesbos to its north and Samos to its south. The five other islands mentioned in this stanza are not covered by the description, being in the Cyclades group in the south-western Aegean.

132 Of Europe and Asia; this description applies only to the first two islands mentioned, Lemnos in the northern Aegean and Icaros in the southern.

133 Salamis in Cyprus was traditionally founded by Teucer, Ajax's half-brother, when he was banished from the other Salamis by his father after returning from the Trojan War without Ajax. Aeschylus may have presented a version of this story in *The Women of Salamis*.

AESCHYLUS

- ἐπὶ δὲ καὶ τὰς εὐκτεάνους κατὰ κλῆρον Ἰαόνιον
 πολυάνδρους
 900 Ἑλλάνων ἐκράτυνε <πόλεις> σφετέραις φρεσίν·
 ἀκάματον δὲ παρὴν σθένος ἀνδρῶν τευχηστήρων
 παμμίκτων τ' ἐπικούρων.
 905 νῦν δ' οὐκ ἀμφιλόγως θεότρεπτα τάδ' αὖ φέρομεν
 πολέμοισι,
 δμαθέντες μεγάλως πλαγαῖσι ποντίαισιν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

- ἰὼ ἰὼ·
 δύστηνος ἐγώ, στυγερᾶς μοίρας
 910 τῆσδε κυρήσας ἀτεκμαρτοτάτης.
 ὥς ὠμοφρόνως δαίμων ἐνέβη
 Περσῶν γενεᾷ· τί πάθω τλήμων;
 λέλυται γὰρ ἐμοὶ γυίων ῥώμη
 τήνδ' ἡλικίαν ἐσιδόντ' ἀστῶν.
 915 εἴθ' ὄφελε, Ζεῦ, κάμει μετ' ἀνδρῶν
 τῶν οἰχομένων
 θανάτου κατὰ μοῖρα καλύψαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁτοτοῖ, βασιλεῦ, στρατιᾶς ἀγαθῆς

- 899 Ἰαόνιον Hermann: Ἰόνιον codd.
 900 ἐκράτυνε <πόλεις> Schütz: ἐκράτυνε(v) codd.
 908 ἰὼ ἰὼ z: cf. 974, 1004–5, 1069, 1073: ἰὼ codd.
 913 ἐμοὶ Schütz: ἐμῶν codd.

PERSIANS

and the wealthy, populous <cities> of the Greeks
 in the Ionian domain he ruled by his wisdom.
 He had available to him the tireless strength of men-at-arms
 and of a mixed multitude of allies.
 But now we are experiencing the decisive reversal of all
 this by the gods in war,
 mightily smitten by blows struck at sea.

[Enter XERXES from the west. He is alone, on foot,¹³⁴ his royal robes
 in rags, and carrying nothing but an empty quiver.]

xerxes

Ιό, ἰό!
 Hapless that I am, to have met
 this dreadful fate, so utterly unpredictable!
 How cruelly the god has trodden
 on the Persian race! What am I to do, wretched me?
 The strength is drained out of my limbs
 when I see these aged citizens.¹³⁵
 Would to Zeus that the fate of death
 had covered me over too
 together with the men who are departed!

chorus

Ototoi, my King, for that fine army,

134 The reference to his tented wagon (1000–1) does not imply that he has returned in it; see Taplin, *Stagecraft* 123.

135 Because (i) there are virtually no young men left, (ii) he has been responsible for the death of so many, and (iii) some of the victims must be sons of the old men he faces.

AESCHYLUS

- καὶ περσονόμου τιμῆς μεγάλης
 920 κόσμου τ' ἀνδρῶν,
 οὓς νῦν δαίμων ἐπέκειρεν.
- προφδ. γὰρ δ' αἰάζει τὰν ἐγγαίαν
 ἦβαν Ξέρξῃ κταμέναν, Ἴδου
 σάκτορι Περσῶν ἀγδαβάται γὰρ
 925 πολλοὶ φῶτες, χώρας ἄνθος,
 τοξοδάμαντες, πάνυ ταρφύς τις
 μυριάς ἀνδρῶν, ἐξέφθινται
 αἰαῖ αἰαῖ κεδνᾶς ἀλκᾶς·
 Ἀσία δὲ χθών, βασιλεὺ γαίας,
 930 αἰνῶς αἰνῶς ἐπὶ γόνυ κέκλιται.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

- στρ. α. ὃδ' ἐγὼν, οἰοῖ, αἰακτός·
 μέλεος γέννα γὰρ τε πατρώα
 κακὸν ἄρ' ἐγενόμαν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 935 πρόσφθογγόν σοι ἦνόςτου τὰντ'
 κακοφατίδα βοάν, κακομέλετον ἰάν
 Μαριανδυνοῦ θρηνητῆρος
 940 πέμπω πέμπω πολὺδακρυν.

- 926 ταρφύς τις Franz: γὰρ φύστις (φύσις b') codd.
 928 αἰαῖ αἰαῖ (αἰ αἰ αἰ αἰ) b: αἰ αἰ or αἰ αἰ M I b k.
 932 πατρώα vel sim. b ΣΦ: πατρία M I b k.
 935 πρόσφθογγον k, cf. ΣΜ προσφάνησιν: προφθόγγους (corrected from
 -ας) b: προφθόγγου or πρὸ φθόγγου M I b k ΣΦ.
 940 πολὺδακρυν Snell: πολὺδακρυν ἰαχάν codd.

PERSIANS

and for the great honour of Persian empire
 and the men who adorned it,
 whom now the god has scythed away!

[They shift from chant to song.]
 The land laments its native youth
 killed by Xerxes, who crammed Hades
 with Persians: many men
 who were marched away,¹³⁶ the flower of the land,
 slayers with the bow, thronging
 myriads of men, have perished and gone.
 Aiai, aiai, for our brave defenders!
 King of our country, the land of Asia
 is terribly, terribly down on her knees!

xerxes

Here am I—oioi!—one to grieve for:
 wretch that I am, I see I have been a bane
 to my nation and my fatherland.

chorus

In response to your return
 I shall send forth, send forth with many tears
 the shout of woeful words, the cry of woeful thoughts
 of a Mariandynian dirge-singer.¹³⁷

136 With W. Kraus, Wiener Studien 104 (1991) 101 n.50, I take ἀγδαβάται to mean ἄγδην (Lucian, Lexiphanes 10) βαίνοντες “marching as if led away by force”.

137 The Mariandyni were a people of north-western Asia Minor (in the hinterland of the Greek colony of Heraclea Pontica), whose ritual laments were famous.

AESCHYLUS

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἀντ. α ἴετ' αἰανῇ πάνδυρτον
 δύσθροον αὐδάν· δαίμων γὰρ ὅδ' αὖ
 μετάτροπος ἐπ' ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦσω τοι καὶ πάνυ, †λαοπαθῇ
 945 τε σεβίζων† ἀλίτυπά τε βάρη
 πόλεως, γέννας· πενθητήρος
 κλάγξω δὴ γοόν ἀρίδακρυ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

σπ. β Ἴαων γὰρ ἀπηύρα,
 951 Ἴαων ναύφαρκτος Ἄρης ἐτεραλκῆς
 νυχίαν πλάκα κερσάμενος δυσδαίμονά τ' ἀκτάν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

955 οἰοιοῖ βόα καὶ πάντ' ἐκπεύθου.
 ποῦ δὲ φύλαν ἄλλος ὄχλος;
 ποῦ δέ σοι παραστάται,
 οἶος ἦν Φαρανδάκης,
 Σούσας, Πελάγων καὶ Δατάμας
 960 ἡδὲ Ψάμμης Σουσιस्कάνης τ'
 Ἀγβάτανα λυτών;

941 πάνδυρτον Passow and C. Schneider: καὶ πανόδυρτον codd. | 944 πάνυ
 West: πανόδυρτον codd.

944 –5 λαοπαθῇ τε (τε om. I b') σεβίζων codd.: λαοῦ τὰ παθεῖα τε σέβων
 Blomfield: λαοῦ πάθεα σεβίζων West: perh. λαοῦ πάθεα τε σεβίσας. | 948 δὴ
 Sommerstein: δ' αὖ codd.

950 –1 Ἴαων M(951): Ἰάνων (or Ἰαόνων or Ἰόνων) M(950), Ms(951), I b
 k.

959 Δατάμας Passow: Δοτάμας vel sim. codd.

960 ἡδὲ Passow: ἡδ' Ἀγαβάτας (Ἀγδα-b') codd.

PERSIANS

xerxes

Utter words of grief and sorrow,
 full of lamentation; for this divinity
 has turned right round against me.

chorus

I shall do so indeed, I tell you,
 honouring the sufferings of the army and the grievous
 blows struck at sea
 to the city and the nation: truly I shall cry forth
 the tearful wail of a mourner.¹³⁸

xerxes

It was the Ionian, the Ionian war-spirit,
 giving victory to their embattled ships, that robbed us of
 our men,
 cutting a swathe across the night-dark expanse of the sea
 and the ill-starred shore.

chorus

Cry “oioioi!” and learn it all.
 Where are the rest, your multitude of friends?
 Where are those who stood beside you,
 men such as Pharandaces was,
 Susas, Pelagon and Datamas,
 and Psammis and Susiscanes
 who went from Agbatana?

138 The text of these lines is badly corrupt, and though the general sense is
 clear, the above translation must be regarded as somewhat tentative so far as detail
 is concerned.

AESCHYLUS

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἀντ. β ὀλοοὺς ἀπέλειπον
 Τυρίας ἐκ ναὸς ἔρροντας ἐπ' ἀκταῖς
 965 Σαλαμινιάσι, στυφέλου θείνοντας ἐπ' ἄκρας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰοιοῖ ἦ ποῦ δέῃ σοι Φαρνοῦχος
 κάριόμαρδός γ' ἀγαθός;
 ποῦ δὲ Σευάλκης ἀναξ
 970 ἢ Λύλαιος εὐπάτωρ,
 Μέμφις, Θάρυβις καὶ Μασίστρας
 Ἀρτεμβάρης τ' ἠδ' Ὑσταίγματος;
 τάδε σ' ἐπανερόμαν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

στρ. γ ἰώ, ἰώ μοι·
 975 τὰς ὠγυγίους κατιδόντες
 στυγνὰς Ἀθάνας πάντες ἐνὶ πτύλῳ,
 ἔῃ, ἔῃ, τλάμονες ἀσπαίρουσι χέρσῳ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦ καὶ Περσᾶν τὸν ἄωτον,
 τὸν σὸν πιστὸν πάντ' ὀφθαλμόν,

965 Σαλαμινιάσι Hermann: Σαλαμινίσι vel sim. codd.

966 ἄκρας Pauw: ἀκτᾶς codd.

967 ποῦ δέ Μ I b k: ποῦ δὴ x: βόα: ποῦ Hermann: ποῦ δὴ ποῦ Page. | 968 γ' Pauw: τ' codd.

973 ἐπανερόμαν Wellauer (after Meineke): ἐπανέρομαι vel sim. codd.

974 μοι b: μοι μοι M I b k.

977 ἔ four times k: twice I: thrice M b k.

978 Περσᾶν τὸν ἄωτον Page: τὸν (τῶν Mac b') Περσῶν αὐτοῦ codd.

PERSIANS

xerxes

I left them dead,
 fallen out of a Tyrian ship off the shores
 of Salamis, striking against a rugged cape.

chorus

Cry "oioioi!" Where did you leave Pharnuchus,¹³⁹
 yes, and the brave Ariomardus?
 Where is the lord Seualces
 or the nobly-born Lilaëus,
 Memphis, Tharybis and Masistras,
 Artembares and Hystaechmas?
 I ask you this again!

xerxes

Ió, ió, ah me!
 After setting eyes on ancient Athens,
 hateful Athens, all of them in one stroke—
 [repeated sobs] gasp their life out wretchedly on the
 shore!

chorus

And what of that flower of Persia,
 your ever-faithful Eye,¹⁴⁰

139 A syllable or two has been lost from the text, but no restoration is entirely convincing; I have translated Hermann's.

140 Greeks believed that one of the high officials in the Persian administration was called "the King's Eye". Cf. Aristophanes, Acharnians 91–125; Herodotus 1.114.2. There is no evidence in Persian sources of the existence of such an official.

AESCHYLUS

- 980 μυρία μυρία πεμπαστάν,
 <---->, Βατανώχου
 παῖδ' ἄλπιστον
 τοῦ Σεισάμα τοῦ Μεγαβάτα,
 Πάρθον τε μέγαν τ' Οἰβάρην
 985 ἔλιπες ἔλιπες; ὦ ὦ δαΐων
 Πέρσαις ἀγαυοῖς κακὰ πρόκακα λέγεις.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

- ἀντ. γ ἱυγγά μοι δῆτ'
 ἀγαθῶν ἐτάρων ἀνακινεῖς
 990 ἄλαστ' ἄλαστα στυγνὰ πρόκακα λέγων.
 βοᾷ βοᾷ μοι μελέων ἔνδοθεν ἦτορ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- καὶ μὴν ἄλλους γε ποθοῦμεν,
 Μάρδων ἀνδρῶν μυριόταγον
 Ξάνθην, Ἀρίων τ' Ἀγχάρην,
 995 Διάϊξιν τ' ἠδ' Ἀρσάκην
 ἱππιάνακτας,
 ῥκηγδαδάταν† καὶ Λυθίμναν

981 lacuna posited here by West: after Ἄλπιστον (sic) by Hermann. | 984 τ' Οἰβάρην z: τ' Οἰβάρην τ' (τυβάνωρ' b) M I b k. | 989 ἀνακινεῖς Headlam: ὑπομνησκεις (a gloss) codd. | 990 ἄλαστ' ἄλαστα Hermann: ἄλαστα codd.

991 μοι Dindorf: om. codd. | 992 ἄλλους Prie: ἄλλο (ἄλλον Ipc) codd. | 993 μυριόταγον (μυριοταγόν) Dindorf: μυριόταρχον vel sim. Mac b k(?): μυριόνταρχον I b k.

997 κηγδαδάταν M b k: κηδαδάταν I b: καγδαδαταν b: καὶ Δαδάταν Weil.

PERSIANS

who counted the numberless tens of thousands,¹⁴¹
 <|>,¹⁴² the favourite son
 of Batanochus,
 the son of Seisames, the son of Megabates,
 and great Parthus and Oebares—
 did you leave them, did you leave them? Oh, oh, hapless
 ones!
 You speak of evils beyond evils for noble Persians.

xerxes

You do stir up in me
 a longing for my brave comrades,
 speaking of unforgettable, unforgettable things, hateful
 beyond hatefulness.
 My heart cries out, cries out, within my body!

chorus

And there are others too that we miss,
 Xanthes the commander of ten thousand Mardians¹⁴³
 and Anchaes of the Arians,¹⁴⁴
 and Diaïxis and Arsaces,
 lords of the cavalry,
 and Egdadates¹⁴⁵ and Lythimnas

141 Possibly alluding to the story (Herodotus 7.60) of the Persian army being counted, ten thousand at a time, at Doriscus in Thrace.

142 The man's name is lost.

143 The Mardi were a nomadic Persian tribe (Herodotus 1.125.4).

144 Another Iranian people (Herodotus 7.66.1).

145 This is the name to which the manuscript tradition seems to point, but many have found it implausible when compared both with real Persian names and with those used elsewhere in the play.

AESCHYLUS

Τόλμον τ' αἰχμᾶς ἀκόρεστον
 1000 ἔταφον ἔταφον οὐκ ἀμφὶ σκηναῖς
 τροχηλάτοισιν ὀπιθεν ἐπομένους.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

στρ. δ βεβᾶσι γὰρ τοῖπερ ἀγρέται στρατοῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βεβᾶσιν, οἷ νόνυμοι.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ιῆ ιῆ, ιὼ ιὼ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1005 ιὼ ιὼ δαίμονες,
 ἔθετ' ἔ' ἄελπτον κακὸν
 διαπρέπον· οἷον δέδορκεν Ἄτα.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἀντ. δ πεπλήγμεθ' ἔ' οἷα δι' αἰῶνος τύχα†.

998 τ' κ: om. cett.

1001 ὀπιθεν Bothe, ἐπομένους Hartung: ὀπισθεν δ' (δ' ὀπ. or δ' ὀπ. δ' b')
 ἐπόμνηνοι codd.

1002 τοῖπερ Passow, ἀγρέται Tour: οἷπερ ἀγρόται (ἀκρόται γρΣΜ) codd.

1006 ἔθετ' (ἔθεντ' b', ἔλθετ' b') codd.: ἔθεσθ' G.C.W. Schneider: ὡς ἔθετ'
 Friis Johansen.

1008 so M (οἷα . . . τύχαι b, οἷαι . . . τύχαι I b k: δαίμονος γρΜ γρΙ): οἷ τᾶς
 δι' αἰῶνος τύχας West.

PERSIANS

and Tolmus, never surfeited with battle.
 I am amazed, amazed, that they are not following
 behind your wheeled tent.¹⁴⁶

xerxes

Yes, those who were marshals of my army have gone.

chorus

They have gone—oi!—without a name.

xerxes

Ieh, ieh! Ió, ió!

chorus

Ió, ió, you gods,
 you have caused suffering that no one expected
 for all to behold! What an evil eye Ruin has cast upon
 us!

xerxes

Oi, we have been struck down from our age-old good
 fortune—¹⁴⁷

146 i.e. a carriage with curtains (the normal Greek word was ἀρμάμαξα), to
 Greeks an emblem of Persian luxury (cf. Aristophanes, Acharnians 70). On his
 westward march to Greece, Xerxes travelled sometimes in a chariot, sometimes in
 a ἀρμάμαξα, with “a thousand of the noblest and bravest Persians” following him,
 together with other picked troops (Herodotus 7.41.1–2). The Persian elders had
 expected that he would return in similar style, with his carriage and his escort: he
 has come back with neither.

147 I translate West's conjecture (Studies 94–95), which involves a syntactic
 construction not exactly paralleled but gives excellent sense, especially in
 contrasting the Persians' “age-old good fortune” with their “new” (1010) and
 unanticipated (1006) disaster.

AESCHYLUS

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πεπλήγμεθ'· εὖδηλα γάρ—

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1010 νέα νέα δὺα δὺα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἰαόνων ναυβατᾶν
κύρσαντες οὐκ εὐτυχῶς.
δυσπόλεμον δὴ γένος τὸ Περσᾶν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

σφ. ε πῶς δ' οὐ; στρατὸν μὲν τοσοῦ-
1015 τὸν τάλας πέπληγμαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' οὐκ ὄλωλεν, μεγάλατε Περσᾶν;

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ὀρᾶς τὸ λοιπὸν τόδε τᾶς ἐμᾶς στολᾶς;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὀρῶ ὀρῶ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1020 τόνδε τ' ὀιστοδέγμονα—

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί τόδε λέγεις σεσωμένον;

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

θησαυρὸν βελέεσσι;

1020 τόνδε Porson: τάνδε vel sim. codd.

PERSIANS

chorus

We have been struck down, that is all too plain—

xerxes

—by new agony, new agony!

chorus

—by an ill-starred encounter
with Ionian sailors.
The Persian race is luckless in war.

xerxes

Indeed it is: I am stricken to misery
in the loss of this great army.

chorus

You who have brought such great ruin to Persia—what is
not lost?

xerxes

Do you see these remnants of my attire?

chorus

I do, I do!

xerxes

[displaying his quiver]
And this arrow-holding—

chorus

What is this that you say was saved?

xerxes

—repository for missiles?

AESCHYLUS

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βαιά γ' ὥς ἀπὸ πολλῶν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἐσπανίσμεθ' ἀρωγῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1025 Ἴάνων λαὸς οὐ φυγαίχμας.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἀντ. ε ἄγαν ἄρειος κατεῖ-
δον δὲ πῆμ' ἄελπτον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τραπέντα ναύφαρκτον ἑρεῖς ὄμιλον;

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1030 πέπλον δ' ἐπέρρηξ' ἐπὶ συμφορᾷ κακοῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

παπαῖ παπαῖ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

καὶ πλέον ἢ παπαῖ μὲν οὖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δίδυμα γάρ ἐστι καὶ τριπλᾶ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

λυπρά· χάρματα δ' ἐχθροῖς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1035 καὶ σθένος γ' ἐκολούθη—

1026 ἄγαν ἄρειος Wellauer: ἀγανόρ(ε)ιος codd.

PERSIANS

chorus

Little indeed, out of so much.

xerxes

Our defenders have been decimated.

chorus

The Ionian people are not cowardly in battle.¹⁴⁸

xerxes

They are all too martial! I have witnessed
a disaster I never expected.

chorus

You mean the rout of our mass of ships?

xerxes

I ripped my robe at the terrible event.

chorus

Papai, papai!

xerxes

No, “papai” is too mild!¹⁴⁹

chorus

Yes, the disaster was twice and thrice as great.

xerxes

Painful, and a delight to our enemies!

chorus

Cut short, too, was the strength—

148 lit. “do not flee the spear-point”.

149 lit. “on the contrary, even more than ‘papai’!”

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

γυμνός εἰμι προπομπῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

—φύλων ἄταισι ποντίαισιν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1038 στρ. ζ δίανε δίανε πῆμα· πρὸς δόμους δ' ἴθι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1047 διαίνομαι γοεδνὸς ὦν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1040 βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δόσιν κακᾶν κακῶν κακοῖς.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ῥυζε μέλος ὁμοῦ τιθεῖς.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ καὶ ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὀτοτοτοτοῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βαρεῖά γ' ἄδε συμφορά·

1045 οἶ, μάλα καὶ τόδ' ἀλγῶ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1046 ἀντ. ζ ἔρεσσ' ἔρεσσε καὶ στέναζ' ἐμὴν χάριν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1039 αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, δὺα δὺα.

1039 and 1047 interchanged by Butler.
1039 see above on 1039/47.

xerxes

I am denuded of escorts!

chorus

—of our friends, by calamities at sea.

xerxes

Wet, wet your cheeks in grief, and go with me to the palace.

chorus

I wet my cheeks in mourning.

xerxes

Cry out now in response to my cries.

chorus

A sad answer of sad sound to sad sound.

xerxes

Raise a song of woe, joining it together with mine.

xerxes

and CHORUS

Ototototot!

chorus

How grievous is this disaster!

Oi, it truly does give me pain!

[Through the next three stanzas the CHORUS successively perform the actions that XERXES prescribes.]

xerxes

Row, row with your arms, and groan for my sake.

chorus

Aiai, aiai! Sorrow, sorrow!

1048 βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.
 μέλιν παρέστι, δέσποτα.
 1050 ἐπορθιάζε νυν γόοις.
 ὁτοτοτοτοῖ.
 μέλαινα δ' ἀμμεμίζεται,
 οἷ, στονόεσσα πλάγα.
 καὶ στέρν' ἄρασσε κάπιβόα τὸ Μύσιον.
 1055 ἄνια ἄνια.
 καὶ μοι γενείου πέρθε λευκήρη τρίχα.
 ἄπριγδ' ἄπριγδα, μάλα γοεδνά.
 αὐται δ' ὀξύ.
 καὶ τάδ' ἔρξω.
 1052 ἀμμεμ- Mac(?), Dindorf: αὖ μεμ- Mpc I b k.
 1053 οἷ Lachmann: μοι codd.
 1056 πέρθε k z: ὑπερθε(ν) MI b k.

xerxes
 Cry out now in response to my cries.
 chorus
 I can take care to do that, master.
 xerxes
 Now raise a high-pitched wail.
 xerxes
 and CHORUS
 Ototototoi!
 chorus
 And mixed in with my groans will be—
 oi!—black, violent blows.¹⁵⁰
 xerxes
 Beat your breasts too, and accompany the action with a
 Mysian cry.
 chorus
 Painful, painful!
 xerxes
 Now, please, ravage the white hairs of your beard.
 chorus
 With clenched hands, with clenched hands, very
 mournfully!
 xerxes
 And raise a piercing shriek.
 chorus
 I shall do that too.

150 Presumably to the head (cf. Cho. 427–8), since Xerxes' next line shows that breast-beating has not yet been mentioned. The blows are "black" because they will be delivered hard enough to raise bruises.

ÆSCHYLUS

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἀντ. η πέπλον δ' ἔρεικε κολπίαν ἀκμῇ χειρῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1061 ἄνια ἄνια.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

καὶ ψάλλ' ἔθειραν καὶ κατοικτίσαι στρατόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄπριγδ' ἄπριγδα, μάλα γοεδνά.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

διαίνου δ' ὄσσε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1065 τέγγομαί τοι.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἐπφδ. βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰοῖ οἰοῖ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

αἰακτὸς εἰς δόμους κίε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰὼ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1070 ἰῶα δὴ κατ' ἄστν—

PERSIANS

xerxes

Tear the folds of your robe with your hands.

chorus

Painful, painful!

xerxes

And pluck your hair, and voice your pity for the army.

chorus

With clenched hands, with clenched hands, very
mournfully!

xerxes

And make your eyes moist.

chorus

I assure you I am moistening them.

[A mournful procession now sets itself slowly in motion, as the
CHORUS escort XERXES away towards his palace.]

xerxes

Cry out now in response to my cries.

chorus

Oioi, oioi!

xerxes

Go wailing to the palace.

chorus

Ió, ió!

xerxes

Let "iό" indeed be heard throughout the city—

AESCHYLUS

ΞΟΡΟΣ

ἰῶα δῆτα, ναι ναι.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

γοᾷσθ' ἀβροβάται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰὼ, Περσὶς αἶα δύσβατος.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

<|>

ΧΟΡΟΣ

<|>

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἦῆ ἦῆ, τρισκάλμοισιν—

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦῆ ἦῆ, βάρισιν ὀλόμενοι.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

<|>

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πέμψω τοί σε δυσθρόοις γόοις.

1073 —4 lacuna posited by West.

1075 —6 lacuna posited by West, who suggests e.g. <πρόπεμπέ νύν μ' ἐς οἴκου>.

PERSIANS

chorus

Let “iō” be heard indeed, yes, yes!

xerxes

—as you lament, while you walk delicately.

chorus

Iō, iō, Persian ground is hard to tread on!¹⁵¹

xerxes

<|>¹⁵²

chorus

<|>.

xerxes

Ehhh-ehhh, ehhh-ehhh—the triple-oared—

chorus

Ehhh-ehhh, ehhh-ehhh—boats destroyed them!

xerxes

<Escort me now to my palace.>¹⁵³

chorus

Yes, I will escort you, with loud wails of grief.

[Exeunt.]

151 Persia was thought of by Greeks as a land of rugged terrain (Herodotus 9. 122; Aristophanes, Birds 833–6; Xenophon, Cyropaedia 1.3.3, 7.5.67); but why should the elders feel this specially now? Are they perhaps walking barefoot, having cast off their shoes as a further gesture of mourning?

152 West (Studies 96) argues convincingly that two lines have been lost here, each probably beginning with yet another cry of woe; without the lacuna, the change of topic is extremely abrupt, and ὀλόμενοι has no construction.

153 I translate West's conjecture; the chorus's final line (with its τοι as in 1065) clearly presupposes that they are obeying an order.